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P. S. VARIER

A Biography

1954

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VAIDYARATNAM

P. S. VARIER

A BIOGRAPHY

BY THE REGISTRAR OF

6 APR 1954

KIZHEDATH VASUDEVAN NAIR B. A.

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A Biography

OF

VAIDYARATNAM

P. S. VARIER

Author :

KIZHEDATH VASUDEVAN NAIR B. A.

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FOREWORD

When, at the request of my friend, the late lamented P. M. Warrier, the Managing Trustee and the Chief Physician of the Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, I started writing the Biography in Malayalam of his illustrious uncle, the late Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier, it struck him that to make the life, activities and achievements of his uncle known to a much wider field of readers outside Kerala, it was necessary to publish a Biography of the great man in English also. And with confidence in me, he entrusted that task also to me. But alas! By the time I wrote half of the English biography, God took him away from us! This terrible tragedy put brakes to my enthusiasm and my work itself. But after recovering from the first shock of the tragedy, the Jubilee Committee wanted me to complete the English biography also and to publish it during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Arya Vaidya Sala. It was only their persuasion and encouragement that made me sit day and night at my desk to complete the writing of the present volume.

This work is not an exact translation of the Malayalam Biography. Some minor events and incidents narrated in the Malayalam work which would create interest only in the Malayalees, have either been ommitted in toto, or skipped over in this volume.

I am extremely happy to record my grateful appreciation of the valuable help rendered to me by Sri. P. K. Velayudha Menon, B. A., B. L., of the "Mathrubhumi", Calicut, who was so kind as to go through my script patiently and to give me excellent suggestions and advice.

Mention may be made of the great help and co-operation readily tendered by the Mathrubhumi Press, Calicut, to bring out this volume in so neat and attractive a manner, in such a short time.

Puthiyara, Kozhikode,
March 1, 1954.

The Author.

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CHAPTER I

HERIDITY

ABOUT sixteen miles to the North of the Calicut Town, there is an interior village, Nanmanda, by name. Though it is now attached to the Calicut Taluk, some fifty years ago it was a part of the Kurumbranad taluk of North Malabar. Contiguous to and North-West of the ancient Panniyinpalli temple in Nanmanda may be seen the house of the Panniyinpalli Bhattathiripad. In the eighteenth century A. D., this house as well as the temple belonged to the Panniyinpalli Variers who were rich, wielding great power and influence under the Rajas of Kurumbranad. Some of the warrior members of this family were, it is said, commanding officers in the redoubtable militia of the warrior Rajas of Kottayam in Malabar.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, this ancient family consisted of only one male member and his sister. The sister was given in marriage to an ancestor of the present Panniyinpalli Bhattathiripad, a learned Malayalee Brahmin. When the brother who was the head of the family died, the family properties were, according to the Marumakkathayam (matriarchal) system of Malabar inherited by the sister and her children. Very soon the family increased in numbers and were in affluent circumstances.

It was at this time towards the end of the century, that Hyder Ali and Tippoo came down on Malabar like a scourge, pillaged and plundered, ravaged and wrought great havoc, forcing the Hindus to

accept the Muslim faith. The terrified Hindu population fled before the cruel and merciless Mysore marauders with all their kith and kin, leaving their properties behind.

Fearful at the fierce onslaught of the invaders, the Panniyinpalli Variers also had to flee for their lives and take refuge in Travancore with their family and friends. Among those who had gone to Travancore seeking asylum from Malabar were members of the families of the Zamorin of Calicut and other chiefs. Therefore, the senior members of the Varier family of whom there were scholars and artists had the good fortune to cultivate the acquaintance of such high-born and distinguished persons as the scholar Princess Manorama Thampuratti of the Zamorin's family, Aazhuvancheri Thamprakkal, the learned and wealthy Brahmin priest of Malabar, and many others. The Maharaja of Travancore also was pleased with them, especially with Achyutha Varier and Madhava Varier, two great artists to whom he gave many rich presents besides a heriditary *Kazhakam* (right to serve in a temple where the family members have a duty to tidy the temple, gather flowers, make garlands etc. in return for which they enjoy many benefits from the temple) in the Ambalapuzha temple in Travancore. The mural paintings on the walls of the Ambalapuzha temple, especially those depicting the story of "Swayamvara Parvathi" which were objects of great admiration and praise by all connoisseurs are the creations of these gifted artists.

After the battle of Seringapatam which saw Tippoo fall dead, bringing in its wake total victory to the English, the Zamorin entered into a treaty with the English and ceded his territories to them. Soon the atmosphere became peaceful; those who had fled from their homes gradually returned to their own villages. Of the Variers of Panniyinpalli who had settled down at Ambalapuzha, Achyutha Varier and his *thavazhi* (branch) alone continued to stay there, the rest returning to Malabar at the close of the eighteenth century.

During their enforced stay at Trivandrum, the Variers had come into close contact with Aazhuvancheri Thamprakkal who had

promised to help them if and when they returned to Malabar. Accordingly, now that they returned under Raghava Varier, the head of the family, the Thamprakkal gladly granted them a *Kazhakam* in his temple of Lord Subrahmania at Kottur in South Malabar. Besides this, when Manorama Thampuratti returned from Trivandrum and settled down at Kottakkal, she was pleased to appoint Raghava Varier as the agent of her Kovilakam (Royal Estates) at Kavathi kalam near Kottakkal.

The then third Raja in order of succession to the Zamorin's Gadi, a brother of Manorama Thampuratti, also came to settle down at Kottakkal. He immediately set to work to improve Kottakkal. The temple of *Venkita Thevar* there (Lord Siva is the presiding deity) was in a dilapidated condition. The Raja renovated it and a great *KALASAM* (purification ceremony) and other important ceremonies were duly performed. When it was found that for the increased work in the temple more persons were needed, Raghava Varier's family was appointed for an additional *Kazhakam*. From that day, leaving Kottur, this family permanently settled down at Kottakkal enjoying the considerably better emoluments they received from the temple.

At first they had their *Variyam* (residence) in a house to the East of the Palace at Kottakkal. But after some years, when the Palace buildings were extended, they had to shift to a place South of the temple where they constructed a house for themselves. For the last one century and a half it has continued to be their family residence. Now we find the Panniyinpalli Varier family having their branches at Nanmanda (the original home), Ambalapuzha in Travancore and at Kottakkal. Years rolled on. In the meanwhile, one Kochusankara Varier became the sole member in the Ambalapuzha branch. It was feared that the family will become extinct with his death. No female member from Kottakkal could convenienty go and settle down at Ambalapuzha. Therefore, Kochusankara Varier was obliged to take a few relations of his from Killikurissi mangalam and Puttur in Malabar to Ambalapuzha. The Panniyinpalli Variers of Ambalapuzha are all their descendents.

When Raghava Varier came down from Ambalapuzha to Malabar with his *thavazhi*, with him had come his nephews Govinda Varier and Ananda Varier, and nieces Parvathy Varasyar and Ittichiri Varasyar, and their children. They were, thus, the first to settle down at Kottur and later, at Kottakkal. Govinda Varier who was an eminent astrologer and physician lived with his Guru, Pulamanthol Mooss, one of the famous Ashta Vaidyas of Kerala. Ever since the original family fled to Travancore, they had no idea as to what had happened to their family residence and properties at Nanmanda. Now Ananda Varier decided to go there to make a survey of the situation. To his utter dismay, he saw that all their properties including their family residence had passed into the hands of those who were quick to return to Nanmanda after Tippoo's death. Those were days when law and order were practically at a very low ebb. The home of the Variers and some of their properties in the neighbourhood were now in the possession of the Panniyinpalli Bhattathiripad.

The Variers were the original trustees of the Panniyinpalli temple. Before he fled to Travancore, the then head of the family had taken care to deposit the idol of the temple in the temple tank lest it was polluted by the Mohammedan invaders. But no one else, not even any of the junior members of the family, was aware of this secret. Therefore, when Ananda Varier came on the scene, neither the temple nor the tank was there. Bereft of all the ancestral properties, and even without the temple of their *Kula Bhara Devatha* (Family deity) there, Ananda Varier's heart ached. He did not know what to do. But when people in the neighbourhood came to know that a scion of the old Panniyinpalli Variers was in their midst they gladly welcomed him and persuaded him to stay there. He was granted a *Kazhakam* in the Nanmanda temple itself, and before long Ananda Varier married a girl from a local Varier family and settled down in his ancestral village. He led a happy and prosperous life there till his dealh in 1056 (Malayalam Era).

At about this time, some calamities shook the Panniyinpalli Bhattathiri family who were in possession of the Variyam and its

properties. He consulted astrologers. On their advice the Bhattathiripad excavated at the place where the tank once stood and got the idol of the temple. Soon they constructed a small temple at the original site and the idol was installed there.

Of the two nieces of Raghava Varier, Ittichiri Varasyar had four sons. They were Soolapani, Sankaran, Madhavan and Achyuthan; Parvathy Varasyar's children were Raman, Bharathan, Lakshmi and Eswaran. Each of these was great in his own way; and brought fame and a fair name to the family. Soolapani Varier, Sankara Varier and Madhava Varier who had their education under different Ashta Vaidyas were themselves reputed physicians, respected and loved not only by the Zamorins and other noble aristocrats of the time, but even by the Ashta Vaidyas themselves.

Achyutha Varier was *Valet de chambre* to the illustrious and heroic Zamorin who was popularly known as *"Saktan Zamorin"* (Zamorin the Mighty). Bharatha Varier was a learned astrologer. Lakshmi alias Kunji Varasyar being the only girl among the children, on her depended the growth of the family. And by her husband, Desamangalath Vidwan Krishna Varier, a well known scholar, she became the mother of three children named Krishnan alias Kuttikrishnan, Parvathy alias Kunhikutty; and Ittichiri alias Kutty. In the course of time, Kuttikrishna Varier attained great proficiency in Samskrit and Ayurveda. And the two sisters, besides having considerable knowledge in Samskrit, were well-versed in music also. In those days, women in Malabar who had proficiency in classical music were few and far between. As Kunhikutty Varasyar and Kutty Varasyar were very good at music, girls from respectable families in the locality came to them to learn music.

At the appropriate time, the wedding of the two sisters were celebrated according to the Malabar custom. Marayamangalath Mankulangara Rama Varier married Kunhikutty Varasyar, and Kutty Varasyar was first married by Desamangalath Sekhara Varier and later, she had as her husband Cherukulath Namboodiri.

CHAPTER II

ANXIETY . . . AND JUBILATION

YEARS rolled on. And yet, the two sisters did not bear children. To keep the family going, it was necessary that the sisters gave birth to children. The members of the old matriarchal families in Malabar were closely knit together with bonds of love and affection to the family. To the senior members of the Marumakkathayam families, the *tharavad* consisting of the sisters and their children were closer than their own wives and children. Therefore, anything that adversely affected the family gave every member anxiety and grief. And in this case, the Panniyinpalli Variers were all very anxious that Kunhikutty Varasyar and Kutty Varasyar gave birth to children soon and helped the family to grow. Prayers and offerings to God were made. Friends then advised them that so long as they lived close to the Siva temple at Kottakkal, the question of children could never be solved, and that therefore, it would be safer to shift to some other place and make the women-folk live there. The Variers decided to try this experiment, bowing to the popular belief. It was resolved to take the female members to Mankulangara in Ponani Taluk, the village of Rama Varier, Kunhikutty Varasyar's husband.

The heriditary profession of Variers was service in temples. If any family could not find themselves attached to a temple, it was regarded as a disgrace to them. Our Variers, before they shifted from Kottakkal, somehow managed to get a *Kazhakam* in

Mankulangara, and began constructing a house there. Just then, Lakshmi alias Kunji Varasyar, the lady of the house, died in 1040 (Malayalam Era), throwing the whole family into severe grief and lamentation. With her ability and driving power, her nobility and kindness, she had proved herself to be a queen among women. And with her departure from their midst, no time was lost in taking her two daughters to Mankulangara where the construction of the house was hastily completed.

Now the senior members of the family grew anxious. They consulted the famous astrologer at Paazhur who advised them to propitiate the Gods. Accordingly, they did many things to please the Gods and their ancestors. And behold! In a few weeks signs of pregnancy were visible in Kutty Varasyar, the younger of the two sisters. In 1042 M. E. she gave birth to a lovely baby girl. Everyone in the family was jubilant over this event. Being a girl, the thought that through her the family could grow, gave them joy and relief. The baby was named Lakshmi in memory of her grandmother who had died two years ago.

After the death of Lakshmi Varasyar, her elder daughter Kunhikutty Varasyar, a very capable girl, was managing the household affairs. Though she had not, as yet, any children of her own, she was extremely glad that the family now had the little daughter of her sister to love and take care of. But the senior members, again, had one desire more. They were all growing grey and advancing in years. Before their death they wished to see a male child also born to the family who would take up the responsibility of protecting and taking care of their women-folk. In the meanwhile, Desamangalath Krishna Varier, the father of Kunhikutty and Kutty also passed away.

Kunhikutty Varasyar was now thirty! She too began to be sad at heart though she was very courageous by nature. She fervently prayed to God; she worshipped at temples; and soon her heart began to throb with joy. She too was expecting a stranger! Quickly did days and weeks and months pass. Gradually, the news trickled down..........Kunhikutty Varasyar is an expectant

mother! All were happy; they anxiously waited for the day. The astrologer at Paazhoor had predicted that Kunhikutty Varasyar would give birth to a male child—a scion who would bring fame and glory to the house.

It was Tuesday the 16th of March, 1869, corresponding to the 4th Meenam, 1044 M. E. At about two O' clock that night Kunhikutty Varasyar gave birth to a baby boy. The joyful news was received by the members of the family with great relief and satisfaction. They poured out their gratitude to God for blessing them with a scion.

The boy was named Sankaran, after his great uncle, the famous physician who had passed away a few months ago. But he was known by the pet names "Sankunni" and "Kuttan". He was the only child born to his parents. After his birth, owing to the constant ill-health of his uncle Kuttikrishna Varier, the little Sankunni and his mother had to live at Kottakkal to look after him. And therefore, even from his childhood Sankunni got himself attached to Kottakkal instead of Mankulangara where the family had their residence.

Kutty Varasyar, in due course, gave birth to three more children – two girls and one boy. They were Madhavikutty, Krishnan and Parvathy, respectively. Of these, Krishnan who was born in 1052 M. E. is the well-known Malayalam poet and *litterateure* who is still active and energetic in this his 77th year.

When little Sankunni was three, according to the custom prevalent in Malabar, he was initiated into learning of the three R's by his own maternal uncle, Kuttikrishna Varier. Even in those early days. the child proved himself to be precocious. There is a story that at that age, when people, out of fondness to him, made fun and asked him to give them medicines, pretending that they were ill, the little boy at once asked each of them to take certain prescribed medicines.

While he was five years old his maternal uncles Rama Varier, Easwara Varier and Kuttikrishna Varier died one after another, leaving only Bharatha Varier who was himself old and sickly. Therefore, on the boy Sankunni fell the rigours and duties of performing the customary religious rites for the three departed souls for a whole year. With the death of Kuttikrishna Varier, his sister and nephew had perforce to live at Kottakkal permanently.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

AFTER the death anniversaries of his uncles were celebrated, the boy was put under Killimangalath Ikkandath Krishna Varier, an erudite scholar, to have his education. In those days a knowledge of Samskrit was considered to be indispensable for boys and girls of higher and middle class families in Kerala. Sankunni had the good luck of getting lessons from great scholars like his own uncle Bharatha Varier, Chunakkara Kochukrishna Varier, Anantha Narayana Iyer and Kaikulangara Rama Varier.

Krishna Varier was holding classes at first in the premises of the Siva temple at Kottakkal. Sankunni had, as his class mates, boys and girls of the aristocratic families of the locality. Of them, many had, in later life, distinguished themselves in various walks of life. Sankunni Varier cherished the sweet memories of those days till his death. With a sparkling in his eyes, he would narrate some of the amusing incidents of his early school days. Some of his class mates were arrant idlers, lazy and stupid. Children had to be dragged to school by their parents. And whenever chances occured the little fellows tried to skulk away from classes, even without the knowledge of their parents at home. When Sankunni saw that some of his friends were habitually "jumping" classes, one day he also took it into his head to taste the "sweets" of playing the knave.

As usual, in the morning that day, he left home under pretence of going to school. But instead of going to school he went to the temple tank and hid himself there. When it was time for interval at school for meals, like a dutiful boy, he went home and came back to his hiding place after food. There was no one else with him to play or chat. He whiled away his time looking at fishes in the water swimming, and frogs leaping about. After some time he began to lose interest in these aquatic creatures. He found that there was no joy in the self-imposed solitary confinement. He yearned to go back to school. But it was too late that day. He had to kill his time at the tank till the usual evening school hour. And then, once for all, he took a resolve not to play the truant in future. Being intelligent and diligent, he escaped punishment at the hands of his teacher.

After some time, most of his class mates left for regular, well-organised schools where education in English also was imparted. Ambitious as he was, Sankunni also was eager to join such schools. But his parents were determined that their son should become a Vaidya to keep up the great family tradition. Therefore, they wanted him to attain proficiency in Samskrit.

It was at this juncture that his Guru, Krishna Varier, had to leave Kottakkal. Therefore, Sankunni took up his studies under his cousin-in-law, Desamangalath Kunhikrishna Varier who was a well versed Samskrit scholar.

About that time, his last surviving uncle Bharatha Varier also died. And that made the twelve-year old Sankunni the '*Karanavan*' (head) of the family.

Bharatha Varier had spent most of his days in the Palace at Kottakkal. In recognition of that, for one whole year after his death, the Palace met all the expenses of the Varier's family. After the first death anniversary was celebrated, Sankunni, as the present head of the family, approached the Palace with the request that the grant be kindly continued as he was too young to take up the responsibilities of a '*Karanavan*'. But the Palace turned down the request saying that such allowances would only make the young

Sankunni lead a lazy life and keep him away from prosecuting his studies with a view to becoming a good Vaidya. At the moment, the young boy regarded this as a cruel act on the part of the Palace authorities. But later, he used to say that it was those words of refusal to help that steeled him in his resolve to make good.

He continued the study of Samskrit with an added zeal. And when he was about sixteen years of age, his teacher and cousin-in-law, Kunhikrishna Varier died a premature death.

CHAPTER IV

AYURVEDIC STUDIES

BY now Sankunni had gained sufficient knowledge of Samskrit so as to take up studies in Ayurveda. Konath Achyutha Varier, a reputed Vaidya and a good scholar was the Palace physician at Kottakkal then. It was of a good augury for the young aspirant, and Sankunni started studying the first lessons in Ayurveda under Achyutha Varier at Kottakkal.

After he was thus initiated into the preliminaries of the subject and having studied the primary texts on it, it was decided that he should study under Ashta Vaidyan Sri Kuttancheri Vasudevan Mooss, one of the foremost Ayurvedic physicians of the time in India. The great teacher whose reputation had spread even beyond the bounds of Kerala welcomed the new desciple into his home where all his desciples had to live together on the same lines as the Gurukula of the ancient days. Here Sankunni Varier was taught by Vasudevan Mooss and occasionally, by Aryan Moos who was also a reputed scholar and physician.

In those good old days the Namboodiri houses (*Mana* or *Illom*) were impregnable fortresses of orthodoxy. No one dared to question their authority; none dared to violate the rules and customs laid down by the Namboodiri chiefs for the conduct of the society. Their voice was supreme and final in Kerala. Even the Maharajas of Travancore and Cochin, and the Zamorin of Calicut looked to

them for guidance in the social and religious life of the community. In these circumstances, to get entry into such a household was itself considered as a very rare privilege. And to get admitted as a desciple of an erudite scholar and great physician such as Ashta Vaidyan Kuttancheri Apphan Mooss was, indeed, the luckiest event in our Varier's life.

With all that, the "Gurukula Vasa" of four long years, especially, during the first few months, was a very trying time for our youngster. All these years, being the only son of his parents, Sankunni Varier was accustomed to a rather happy and comfortable life at home. Now he who was still in his teens had to live permanently in the house of his Guru and adapt himself to the peculiar and rigourous modes of life of a high-class orthodox Brahmin family of Malabar. While at home, the young Sankunni was accustomed to taking his principal meal at eight O'clock in the morning. But, as almost every day, the Brahmin householder had to perform various religious rites he could take his food only after the Sun passed the Meridian. The women of the household, according to the prevailing custom, took their food only after the male members had eaten. And only after all the Brahmins – men as well as women – partook of their meals could the non-Brahmin desciples, dependents, servants etc. were served. That would often be about time for the Sun to touch the Equinox!

Hotels and restaurants were unknown in those bye-gone days, especially in the rural parts of Kerala. So the question of people like our youngster messing in a hotel or taking refreshments in a restaurant did not arise. Moreover, the Varier community also had their own orthodox customs and ways of life. They could not eat in a place other than the residence of members of their own community, or of the Brahmins, or in a temple. Therefore, Sankunni Varier had to rest content with whatever he got from his Guru's residence, however late it might be.

There were other difficulties too which the young desciple had to put up with. A reputed physician that his Guru was, he (the Guru) had often to go long distances to see an ailing patient.

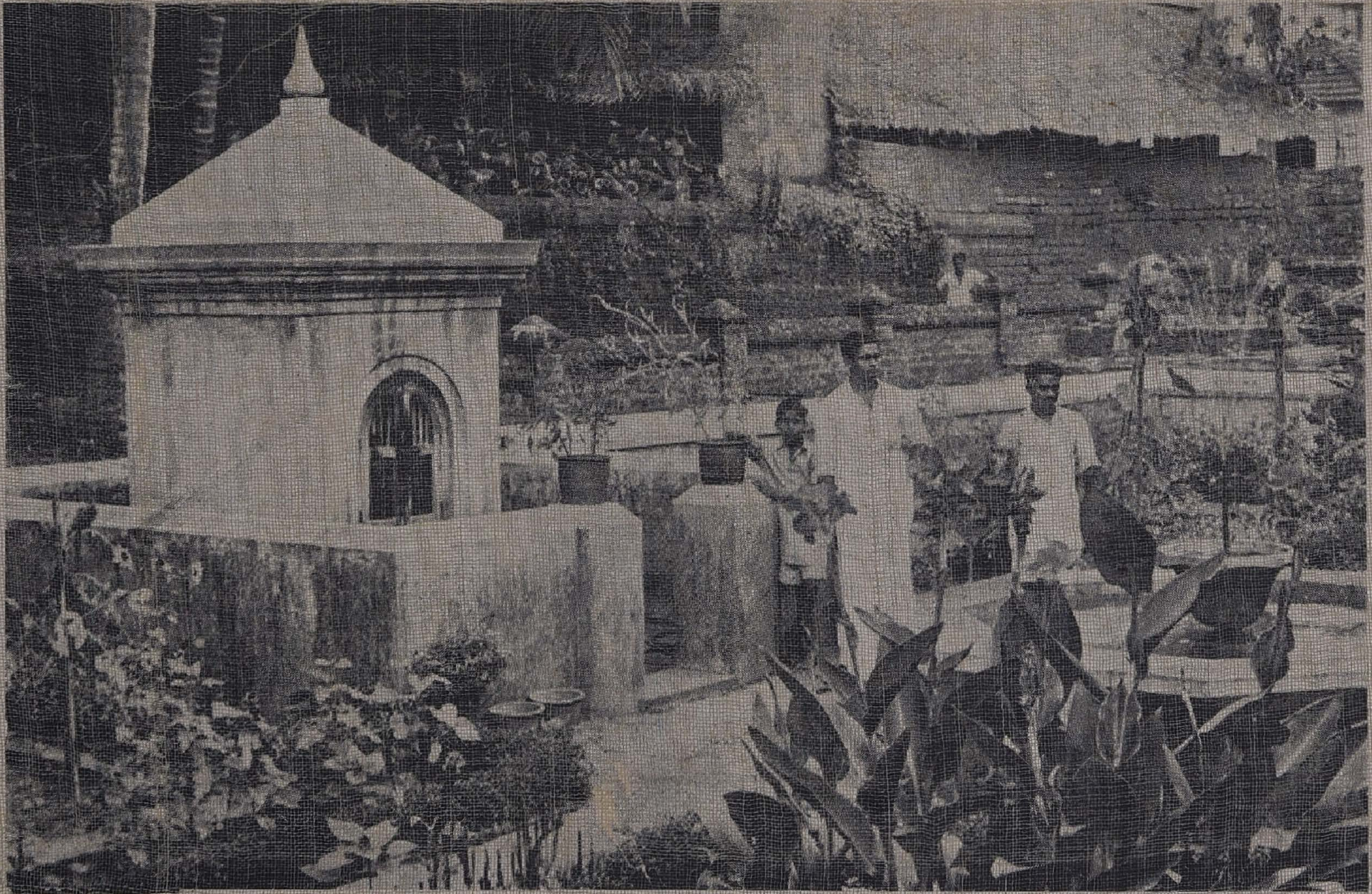
On occasions like that one or two desciples had to accompany him. Sometimes the Guru had to stay away for days together in distant places. On such occasions the desciple or desciples who accompanied him were to carry all the articles of daily use belonging to the Guru, trucking miles and miles on rugged roads and paths, while the Guru went in a bullock-cart or in a palanquin. As the cart driver was almost always a Muslim or an "untouchable" the Guru's personal apparel and other articles could not be entrusted to him, lest they should be polluted. The desciple had to run behind the cart to keep pace with it with the load of articles on his head, in pouring rain or blazing sun.

Even when the desciple was in the Guru's house he had to do odd jobs and to attend to all the needs of the Guru. And often these duties fell to the lot of the youngest of the desciples. At the time when Sankunni Varier was at the Gurukula he happened to be the youngest of them. But he never shirked his duties however irksome and rigourous they were. On the contrary, he was indeed happy, he could always be near his teacher and serve him and learn from him.

To keep up the prestige of his Guru, on one occasion in the later stages of his Gurukula period, our young Varier had to accompany a friend of his Guru, walking over ten miles with a huge load of heavy bronze vessels in the hottest part of the day. The strain was too much for him. He fulfilled the mission all right, but fell ill and was bedridden for weeks together.

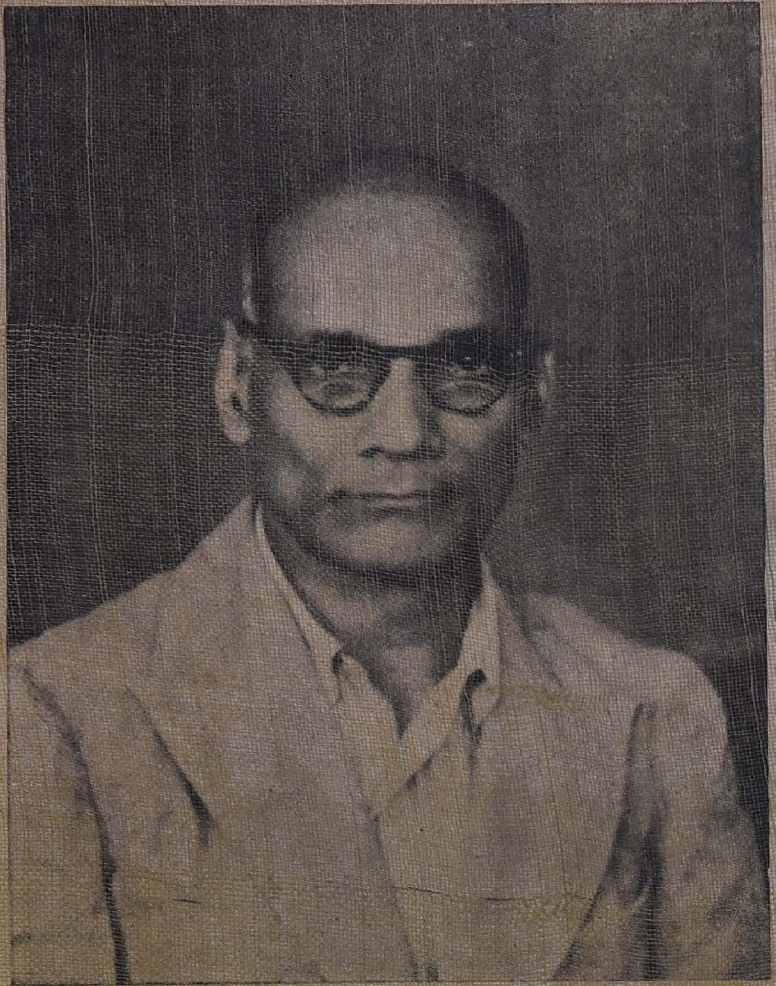
For four years Sankunni Varier learned the science and practice of Ayurveda at the feet of his great master. By 1065 M. E., he had completed almost all his lessons, thanks to the loving interest bestowed on him by his Guru. Before finishing his course at his Guru's place, he went to Nelluvayi near Vadakkanchery (Cochin State) and offered worship to Lord Dhanwanthari there for several days. And after returning from there he completed his studies and gave appropriate "Guru Dakshina" to Apphan Mooss and Aryan Mooss and received their blessings and good wishes.

The next step was to return home at Kottakkal. Of course, it was a great wrench to bid farewell to his beloved Guru, the members of the household there and his own fellow desciples and friends with whom he had lived for four years. Many a hardship was there, of course; but he had learned to tide over them and be at his ease at the Gurukula. The love and affection bestowed on him by his Gurus and the kind treatment meted out to him by the mother of his younger teacher (Aryan Mooss) had helped him to lessen the rigours of life there. Therefore, it was with tears rolling down his cheeks that the young Varier bade farewell to his sacred and beloved Gurukula.



Samadhi of Vaidyaratnam Varier In the Garden of "Kailasa Mandiram."

P. V. Krishna Varier (P. S. Varier's first cousin—
Joint Editor of the "Dhanwanthari")



Vaidya Visarada P. K. Ramunni Menon
Principal, A. V. College, Kottakkal

मध्यमश्रेणिप्रशंसापत्रम्

श्रीः ।

अखिल-भारतवर्षीय-वैद्यसम्मेलनम्

षोडशाधिवेशनसम्बन्धिन्यां प्रदर्शन्यां जयपुरे
कोट्टक्कल वास्तव्यैः श्री वैद्य पि. एस. वारियर
महाशयैः पुस्तकविभागे प्रेषितमष्टाङ्ग शारीरं
पुस्तकं परीक्षणसमितेः निर्णयमनुसृत्य सबहुमानं सप्रमोदं च प्रशस्यते इति प्रमाणयति प्रमाणपत्रमिदम् ।

प्रदर्शनविभागाध्यक्षः

मदन मोहन मालवीय
षोडशायुर्वेदसम्मेलन-सभापतिः ।

जयपुरम् ।
मिति चैत्र कृष्ण २ सं १९८८

Certificate obtained for the book "Sareera Sastra"
at the All India Ayurvedic Congress, Jaipur

Dr. V. Verghese

Arya Vaidya sala (front view)
(P. S. Varier's living Apartments were on the second floor for many years)

CHAPTER V

OUT FOR THE WESTERN

HAVING completed his studies in Ayurveda, Varier returned to his village at Kottakkal and set up practice as a Vaidya. He was now about twenty. Even while he was at the Gurukula, this ambitious youth had started to lay out plans of his future course. He was not in for a mere Vaidya, examining his patients and writing out prescriptions and recipes for them. His ambition was to raise Ayurveda to higher levels and bring it in line with the popular system of Allopathy. To achieve this object he saw that it was necessary to organise a sound institution where Ayurvedic medicines could be manufactured on scientific lines, not deviating from the principles of Ayurveda, and to supply ready-made medicines to the patients instead of directing them to prepare medicines themselves as was the custom then. To put this plan in working order, a large amount of capital investment was needed. The question of money put brakes to his plans, for the while.

Allopathic medicines were readily available in the market, thanks to the high development and industrialization that system had undergone. But Ayurveda remained stagnant, the Ayurvedic physicians resting satisfied with merely writing out the prescriptions, leaving the large class of patients in the lurch. To prepare Ayurvedic medicines at home the patient had to undergo a lot of trouble. And it was not always easy to prepare medicines

according to sastric principles by those who were not good Vaidyas. In spite of its efficacious drugs and medicines, this obstacle stood in the way of its progress and popularity. Though quite young and ill-equipped, Varier, farsighted as he was, saw that unless somebody made a move in the direction of developing Ayurveda on progressive lines there was little hope for its future. What was urgently needed was an organization to manufacture and supply medicines and to simplify and popularise the Ayurvedic treatment.

He wished he could do it himself and give a start in the right direction. But where was the money to come from? The idea being a novel one, at its early stage, no one would venture to advance him loans. His mother who was running a small, private banking business at home could help him with money. But the thrifty and cautious woman that she was, she would not allow him to venture on the unchartered seas. But what about the father? Why not approach him? Varier knew that his father was not in such affluent circumstances as to advance him money for such an enterprise. But he could assist him to start a chit fund which was very popular in Malabar especially because banking organisations were a rare commodity in rural parts. By starting a chit fund the organiser would get a good amount in ready cash at the very outset which he could utilize for his own needs. But a young man just out from his educational institution will not be able to create the required confidence among the public, particularly when the question of money was involved. He, at last, requested his father to stand by him and to lend his name for the chit fund he wished to start. The cautious father turned a deaf ear to his entreaties.

Undaunted, Sankunni Varier resolved to work his own way up. He had faith in God and confidence in his own abilities. So, he determined to start a chit fund and to seek the help of friends. His original idea was to raise a capital of Rs. 600 with twenty subscribers, each subscriber paying Rs. 30 a month. But he could enlist only fifteen and to raise Rs. 450 As soon as the first chit was drawn he started with the plans of organising an

Ayurveda Oushadha Sala. But suddenly his mother stood before him and warned him not to touch a pie of the chit fund before all the chits were drawn and the parties had been paid their full dues. Her argument was that until his obligations to the subscribers were fulfilled her son remained a debtor to them, and a debtor had not the right to invest monies belonging to others on an object or for a purpose the results of which could not be foreseen. Laudable though the advice, it threw, for the moment, cold water on the aspiring and ambitious son. Everything looked dark before him. His father refused to help him; and his mother threw obstacles before him. What could he do now? The obedient and dutiful son that he was, he dared not spurn the advice of his capable and intelligent mother.

He thought for a while; thought furiously of his next step. He resolved to follow his mother's example. She was running, as I said before, a small banking business with her own small savings, her sister's money and their family earnings, all under separate accounts, by advancing loans to the villagers on the security of jewels pledged with her. It was a thriving business. Sankunni Varier decided to do similar business with the money he had from the chit fund instead of keeping it idle. And luck came his way.

Now that he was unable to use his money for his ambitious project, he decided to raise subscriptions from friends to start a small Vaidya Sala. He was able to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of some who paid him subscriptions at the rates o- a Rupee, eight Annas and four Annas each. Very soon he got enf couragement from the public and gained momentum in his business in ready-made Ayurvedic preparations. It was said that in those days he was able to sell medicines valued at Rs. 60/- some months. This primary venture of his may justly be called the genesis of the Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, which is one of the biggest of its kind in India today.

While he was thus running a small Vaidya Sala and practising as an Ayurvedic physician, he was eager to probe into the

mysteries of the Allopathic system, too. Rather too ambitious a desire for one unlettered in the English language. But Varier who knew no obstacles when his mind was intent on doing a thing, anxiously thought of ways and means of learning English which was the key to the study of the Western system of medicine. A pass in the Matriculation was necessary to gain admission in a medical school or college which taught the Allopathic system. There was another difficulty, too. To get a pass in the Matriculation, he had first to join a school and start from the lower classes. A young man of twentytwo to sit with little children of eight or nine! He would be the laughing stock of everybody including the little children who would happen to be his class mates. So, joining the lower classes was out of the question. What then?

He thought over the problem until at last a practical solution crossed his mind. He resolved to take private tution in English from some of the educated princes of the Kizhakke Kovilakam. Without losing a moment, he approached Sri Kuttiettan Raja, a generous-hearted prince and every inch, a gentleman having many public activities to his credit. The Raja readily agreed to teach Sankunni Varier. And to be of use to this young aspirant, Varier records with gratitude, that the Raja did not hesitate to sacrifice his own comforts and conveniences. It was in the Raja's room in the palace that Sankunni Varier took his first lessons in English. Ere long, a private school for the young princes of Kottakkal was opened within the palace and Varier got admission there. Sri Kuttianujan Raja, a kind prince, was his teacher here. Thanks to him, Varier was able to learn everything required for the lower secondary examination in the course of a year. But as fate would have it, the eye trouble which he had contracted during his Gurukula period became so severe that he was painfully forced to stop his studies.

The Assistant Surgeon of the Hospital at Manjeri, at that time, was Dr. V. Verghese (after many years he became the Chief Medical Officer of the Cochin State), an able physician and kind surgeon. He was a clever ophthalmic surgeon, too. Sankunni

Varier went to Manjeri to consult the Doctor who diagnosed his trouble as Granular ophthalmia. Treatment was started, Varier staying at Manjeri for the purpose for two months. During this period, a very close and brotherly attachment grew up between the Doctor and the patient.

While a patient in the Hospital, Varier was closely observing the admirable ways of the Doctor and the methods he was adopting in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The long-felt desire to learn the Allopathic system which Varier was cherishing in his mind was once again kindled. He asked himself whether Dr. Verghese could take him as a pupil and teach him the Allopathic system as Kuttancheri Moos had taught him Ayurveda. But at once he gave up the thought saying to himself that a busy physician and surgeon like Dr. Verghese would not have the time and convenience to teach him. Yet, the desire to learn the Western system was there, gnawing at his heart. There was no knowing how and when he could take his matriculation, and then enter a Medical School or College. If he could study Allopathy without joining a regular school or college, it would save him much trouble and time. For many days during his stay at Manjeri these thoughts haunted him. And at last, having got rid of the eye-trouble, the time to bid farewell to the Doctor arrived.

And then, something like a miracle happened. On the eve of his proposed departure from Manjeri, Dr. Verghese, accosting Varier said: "Mr. Varier, you are out to eke out your livelihood leading theprofession of a physician; why don't you stay here for some time and try to learn our methods also? That would give you an added advantage." Varier thought he was day-dreaming and that an angel was talking to him. He could not, for a moment, believe his ears; and he remained spell-bound. He looked with surprise at the Doctor. Tears of joy and gratitude filled his eyes. In his heart of hearts he raised a prayer of thanks to God who, he thought, was speaking to him through the kind Doctor.

After the excitement of the moment was over, Varier gratefully bowed to the Doctor and expressed his thanks and

willingness to accept his advice in a few faltering words. And from that day the Doctor and the patient became teacher and desciple. Inscrutable are the ways of God!

Varier was very earnest and keen in his studies under Dr. Verghese. He was ready to do anything to reap a rich harvest in the new field of knowledge in which he had just started cultivation. He used to arrive at the Doctor's residence, every day, at 7-30 a. m. to accompany the Doctor to the Hospital where he (Varier) was allowed to examine patients and diagnose diseases. When the Doctor suspected any of Varier's diagnosis was wrong, he would himself examine the case and explain to his pupil the nature of the disease, his reasons to arrive at the conclusion, the treatment proposed to be given and other details. Varier was given training in the Materia Medica of the Western system and in dispensing medicines. He was entrusted by his teacher with the task of observing his patients from day to day and reporting on their progress and conditions. Varier had the benefit of being present to watch the surgical process at the operation theatre where also the Doctor explained to him things. And when his pupil had gained sufficient knowledge the Doctor gave him opportunities to act as an anaesthetist and to perform minor operations.

Between the hours of 2 and 4 p. m. the Doctor gave his pupil regular lessons at his own residence. At 4 p. m. both of them went to the Hospital returning to the Doctor's residence at dusk. And then, till 9 O'clock at night, they used to sit together, discuss the various cases in the hospital and outside, spending the time usefully and pleasantly. Dr. Verghese, besides being a kind and noble Doctor was also very witty and humorous. Usually, in the evenings, his friends would call at the Doctor's place to while away their time. On such occasions, the Doctor, keen in giving his pupil all possible help, would begin to talk about his numerous patients, giving details of their complaints, the way in which each patient talked and behaved, and how the patients reacted to his treatment etc. in a humorous way, making his audience often roar with laughter. Thus Varier found his time fleeting without the least strain or tedium.

After 9 p. m. Varier went to his hotel and after food sat at his desk and read. At dawn too, he was in the habit of reading. Varier used to accompany the Doctor on the latter's rounds to see his patients in the village and the neighbourhood, and be present at the post mortem of dead bodies in the Hospital mortuary where he could closely observe and learn with the help of the Doctor details of the anatomical structure of the human body.

For over three years, Dr. Verghese and Sankunni Varier were together, the former imparting and the latter imbibing knowledge in the Allopathic system of medicine, at first at Manjeri and later, at Badagara in North Malabar, where the Doctor went on transfer. They became inseperables—not as Guru and Sishya, but as twin brothers—each having great love and esteem of the other. By this time, Sankunni Varier had acquired considerable practical knowledge which he would not have been able to gain in the course of three years if he were a student in a Medical school or college.

And now the inevitable separation took place. Dr. Verghese was under orders of transfer to the distant Cuddapah. Varier, whose parents were fast growing old, could not accompany the Doctor to such a far off place. The thought of seperation from his loving Guru was heart-rending to him. Together were they for the past three years and over. And together did they entrain at Badagara—the Doctor *en route* to Cuddapah and Varier on his way home to Kottakkal. In a few hours the train steamed in at the Tirur Railway station. In spite of his courage, Sankunni Varier could not contain himself. He could neither restrain his tears. Farewell! Oh! How painful it is!

All through his life, Sankunni Varier cherished grateful memories of the useful and pleasant years he had spent with the good Dr. Verghese, and he often used to tell his friends that it was Dr. Verghese who helped to shape his future. On January 18, 1931, when Dr. Verghese had paid a courtesy visit to his old sishya at Kottakkal, Varier presented him with a beautiful bejewelled gold Cross as a mark of his love and respect to his beloved Guru.

CHAPTER VI

BACK HOME

NOW that he was back at home a budding physician who had gained considerable knowledge in the Ayurvedic as well as the Allopathic systems, Varier could set up practice and start life. But he took it into his head to learn a little of the *Alankara Sastra*, and chose, as his Guru for this purpose, Sri Killimangalath Krishna Varier, the great scholar under whom he had learned his first lessons as a little boy. He went through "Kuvalayanandam Chandrika" in Alankara. Simultaneously, he was teaching a few youngsters of his locality including his cousin P. V. Krishna Varier, Samskrit and Ashtanga Hridaya.

Varier's mother was a talented musician; while he was a small boy, she taught him some music and how to play on the veena. He had very good taste for the art. Therefore, on his return from the medical studies (western) when he found that Sri Perumangot Krishna Varier, a talented Kathakali musician was staying in his house to teach the girls there, Sankunni Varier took a fancy to learning Kathakali music, and soon became proficient in it. During the same period, he learned a number of Krishnattam songs also under Sundaram Bhagavathar, the palace musician of Kottakkal. Varier had given several public exhibitions of his musical talents at many Kathakali and Krishnattam performances in his younger days.

He set up practice as a physician in his own village. As he knew that the general public were more attached and attracted to the Allopathic system, he began to treat his patients according to that system. When the Chief Prince of Kottakkal who was not on good terms with Sankunni Varier's father came to know of this he sent word to Varier that it was not advisable to prescribe Allopathic medicines without qualifying for it properly. Sankunni Varier replied, "I do it only with great care". Some days passed. It was Vishu (New year) day. According to the prevailing custom at Kottakkal, Sankunni Varier also went early in the morning that day to have "darshan" of the Chief Prince and to receive at his hands "Kai Nettam" (money present of the New Year Day). More than a thousand people were there in the Palace hall for the same purpose at that time. The moment the Prince's eyes fell on our Varier he burst out with the words, "I am told that you were prescribing allopathic medicines; I warn you that if you continue this unauthorised practice, very soon you would find shackles on your wrists".

This came to the youth as a shock, especially because it was the most auspicious day of the year. Moreover, the Prince's wrath was exhibited in the presence of a huge assemblage. After a moment, the young Varier coolly said to the Prince, "I do only what I know". Earlier, while Sankunni Varier had started to study English at the Palace school, this Prince had expressed his disdain and dislike at this aspiring and ambitious youth.

The fact that the Prince who was the first citizen of Kottakkal and others like him were on the look out to find fault with his actions braced our youth up though, at first, the Prince's warning seemed to him to be graceless and malicious. Varier began to be more careful lest he committed mistakes in prescribing or giving Allopathic medicines. He took extra care to examine his patients with a view to arriving at correct diagnosis; he explained to the patients the nature of the disease, the methods he was adopting to give a cure and the effects of the medicine he was using for the purpose. Thus, the Prince's admonition proved to be a blessing in disguise in spite of its unsavoury nature. In a

short while, his patients began to like him and to trust him; and they began to have faith in his words and treatment. The result of it was that the Chief Prince's own physician found his popularity and influence among the people of Kottakkal waning while Sankunni Varier's influence was steadily on the ascendant.

At about this time, Varier's cousin, Madhavi Varasyar suddenly took ill at the family residence at Mankulangara in Ponani Taluk, and in spite of the best medical aid available, she breathed her last on the 8th of Kanni, 1070 M. E. This sad event plunged the whole family into great grief. Life at that place seemed to be intolerable to the members of the family. Therefore, they decided to shift to Kottakkal for ever, and left Mankulangara for good.

Till now, Sankunni Varier's father, Rama Varier whose home and family residence were at Mankulangara had the company and help of his sister-in-law (Kutty Varasyar) and her children. But with their departure for Kottakkal, a state of helplessness and solitude enshrouded him. To give his father peace of mind and all possible help Sankunni Varier was now obliged to go to Mankulangara from Kottakkal, from time to time.

Other unpleasant events also connected with his family began to worry him and his parents. Therefore, with a view to propitiating the Gods he took his mother and mother's sister on pilgrimage to Rameswaram.

The family residence at Kottakkal was a small one in those days and it was becoming too ricketty and old, besides being unable to accommodate the whole family since the arrival of Varier's aunt (mother's younger sister) and her children. When it was found that the house was quite unsafe, it was demolished and a new one was constructed on the site. The *"Griha Pravesa"* was celebrated in Makaram, 1075 M.E. The cost of construction was met from the family income, Varier having had to spend only very little from his own pockets.

Sankunni Varier's father, Rama Varier, had been ordered by the Zamorin Raja (the same Prince who had chastised Sankunni

Varier for practising allopathy) not to enter the Kottakkal village. Those were days when no one in Malabar dared to raise a voice against the commands of the Zamorins. Hence Rama Varier was forced to live in separation from his wife and children for a few years until the death of that Raja on the 8th Makaram, 1075 M. E. It was the new incumbent on the gadi that gave him freedom of entry into the village.

Two years later, Rama Varier fell ill at his own village in Mankulangara. In spite of careful and affectionate nursing and medical attention bestowed on him by his son and wife, on the 7th of Kumbham, 1077 M.E. he breathed his last.

The obsequies and rites connected with his father's death were all performed under his own supervision by Sankunni Varier. And now he was just trying to take some rest. But suddenly news reached him that his aged Guru, the great Ashta Vaidyan Kuttancheri Apphan Moos was lying critically ill at his place and the end was expected any moment. The news gave Varier a great shock. He could not even think of death approaching a great man like his Guru, gem of a man and prince among scholars and physicians. Hastily attending to certain very urgent and important matters at home Sankunni Varier set off to Vadakkanchery, where the Moos was living, 72 miles from Kottakkal. The whole distance had to be covered on foot. The road was rough and rugged, ill-built and muddy. But he felt no strain as all his thoughts were with his beloved teacher. Stopping on the way only for his scanty food, Sankunni Varier walked as fast as he could. And at each step he saw before his mental vision memories of the numerous kind acts and benevolent treatment he had received at his teacher's hands during the four years of his Gurukula vasa.

The next day, at about 4 p.m. he reached his Guru's residence, worn and fatigued. When he arrived there he learned that it was only a question of minutes. Heaving a heavy sigh, tears rolling down his cheeks, he rushed into the room where the great man lay, face to face with Death, and fell prostrate at his beloved teacher's feet. This sudden action of the youth caused a flutter in

the room; and that roused the Guru for a moment. He opened his eyes and fixed them on his sobbing desciple, and in a trice ....! The flickering eyes of the greatest physician of the time in Kerala closed with an affectionate smile on his lips for his decsiple; closed in eternal sleep!

To our Varier the whole world looked utterly blank. But on second thoughts relief came to him. Supposing his Guru had died before he (Varier) reached the place and he had not the chance of seeing him alive; it would have created a deep void in his heart. But now, thanks to God, it looked as though his Guru resisted Death until his fond desciple came to him. So, Sankunni Varier consoled himself with the thought that his Guru had given him his (Guru's) last blessings.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARYA VAIDYA SALA

NOW that both his father and Guru had departed from this world giving him their blessings, Varier decided not to tarry any more to launch his long-cherished venture. Immediately he set to work. The picture before him was an Oushadha Sala on modern and scientific lines where people could get efficacious medicines prepared strictly on Ayurvedic principles. By now Varier had the resources to invest the necessary capital.

He purchased a small compound on the eastern side of the road leading from the Kottakkal Palace to the bazaar for 125 Rs. Though he had to encounter some obstacles before getting possession of the site, with the help of Sri Marumakan Raja, a very noble and generous prince of the Kizhakke Kovilakam, who had on many occasions given succour to Varier, he overcame the difficulties and soon constructed the necessary buildings for the Vaidya Sala, laboratory etc. The stocking and selling of ready-made Ayurvedic preparations were a novel experiment in South India. And people were curious to know the actual shape and form of Varier's new *enterprise*. The ancient system of Ayurvedic treatment had gone into disrepute at the time when Varier started his Vaidya Sala. Therefore, he saw that it was time, somebody tried to resuscitate the great science and system by instilling in the minds of the people the needed faith by proving

the valued qualities and efficacy of the Ayurvedic medicines. He could foresee that to attain popularity, Ayurveda had to move out of the old ruts, adopting modern techniques without detriment to its inherent qualities. That alone would attract the common man from the already popular Allopathic system which had the patronage and support of the Government of the land. He was determined to do his utmost to reach the goal by crossing all hurdles. With faith in God and confidence in his own capacity, he set off for the goal.

It was Vijaya Dasami Day – the 12th October, 1902. On that auspicious day, the Arya Vaidya Sala, the first of its kind in South India, was inaugurated as a home industry by Sankunni Varier at Kottakkal. On that occasion, Varier who started writing his name as P. S. Varier from that eventful day, issued a manifesto over his name setting out his objects.

Tracing the history of Ayurveda, he had summarised the causes that led to its downfall. He said, "the Ayurvedic practitioners depended on illiterate and indifferent employees whom they engaged to do all the work connected with the preparation of drugs such as gathering, keeping, buying, selling, preparing and using raw drugs, plants, herbs and such other ingredients needed for the preparation of medicines; such people often do things contrary to the principles of Ayurveda. Even learned Ayurvedists are unable to distinguish the genuine from the adulterated ingredients thereby going in for the wrong drug. On account of the indifferent and irresponsible ways of the physicians the general public lose confidence in the ancient science and sastra.

"Every Vaidya should be well-conversant with all the drugs, plants, herbs and other ingredients used in making Ayurvedic medicines. But that does not mean that all Vaidyas should, necessarily, prepare medicines themselves and stock them. Every one may not find it easy and feasible to do it. Therefore, what we would suggest is that some of the learned Vaidyas join together and promote a company on co-operative basis with the object of manufacturing Ayurvedic medicines and preparations on

strict Ayurvedic principles, taking very good care to select the right ingredient after proper test. Other Vaidyas themselves could buy or, advise their patients to buy from the company. Here, we could follow the example of the Allopaths with profit. The Allopaths are able to get their medicines and drugs from reliable and expert pharmaceutical companies having their agents or stockists in every town. It is meaningless to say that our ancestors had not adopted such methods. It is time we moved with the times and followed modern ways, wherever useful and necessary. If we, the Vaidyas, co-operate with each other and make an effort on right lines success will be ours.

"It is with this aim in view that we have established this Vaidya Sala where patients shall be examined carefully, and treatment prescribed with great thought; scientifically prepared medicines shall be supplied to our patients as well as to Ayurvedic practitioners at reasonable prices. Assurance may be given that medicines shall be manufactured here with great care by experts. Arrangements have been made to prepare and stock *kashayas* (decoctions) on the Western model without detriment to their quality and purity. Only the best ingredients and raw materials shall be used. Besides these, we shall always be ready to manufacture medicines for other Vaidyas according to their particular and special prescriptions.

"All correspondence shall be attended to promptly every day".

Considering the fact that this thought provoking manifesto was issued over a half century ago one should bow to the foresight, progressive outlook and noble ideas of Varier who was born and brought up in an interior village surrounded by orthodoxy and out-moded beliefs. Varier, who had very little of schooling in the modern civilization, who had no inkling of the modern methods of commerce and indnstry, wanted his compeers to join together and float a company on co-operative lines. From a mere villager like him came such ennobling thoughts and practical ideas. No wonder, people in his village regarded him as a visionary and moon-struck. Green-eyed people branded him a huge humbug, out to decieve the unwary villager.

To raise and revive the glorious system of Ayurvedic medicine from the Slough of Despond was the goal which Varier aimed to reach. For that he prepared to risk his everything. Till then Ayurveda was looked down upon with contempt by people who were hypnotised as it were by the "wonders" of the allopathic system which had the patronage and support of the Government of the land. The numerous difficulties experienced by patients in preparing Ayurvedic medicines at home as against the ready availability of bottled Allopathic medicines turned most people towards the Western system. The Ayurvedic physician contented himself with simply writing out and giving the prescription containing innumerable drugs many of them difficult to obtain or to be recognised by the lay man. The average patient found it exceedingly expensive and irksome to prepare medicines at home. And Ayurveda remained static while the Western system made rapid strides in discovering "wonder drugs" and novel methods of cure. That explains the causes that led to the decline of Ayurveda in this country. It was to meet these difficulties that P. S, Varier founded his Arya Vaidya Sala at Kottakkal·

The numerous *kashayas* play an important and significant role in Ayurveda. Because of the difficulty experienced in preserving them, patients had to prepare them. every two or three days. P. S. Varier was the first to make *kashayas* preserved in bottles for any length of time without detriment to their quality and efficacy, to the immense relief of the large mass of patients. Even today, among the manufacturers of Ayurvedic medicines in Kerala P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala and a very few such owned or managed by some of the "Arya Vaidyas" who had the good fortune to get themselves trained under P. S. Varier, alone stock preserved *kashayas*.

Varier spared no pains to put all objects laid down in the manifesto into practice. That explains the wonderful popularity his Vaidya Sala and his medicines gained not only in and out of Kerala but even beyond the seas. But at the time of its inception very few people put faith in this novel experiment. They doubted its usefulness; they predicted an early end to it.

But nothing daunted, Varier went on with his pioneering work. He was determined to go ahead with his plans. And soon God gave him an opportunity to prove his mettle.

All on a sudden Kottakkal and its neighbourhood were in the grips of a ravaging cholera. People became panicky and fled the village, leaving their infected kith and kin to be looked after by strangers. Until a decade or two ago infectious diseases like small-pox and cholera were regarded by the people of Malabar as a punishment from God. Therefore, instead of trying to cure the malady by administering drugs, people tried to propitiate the Gods—especially, Goddess Kali. They were afraid not only to live under the same roofs of the affected person but were fearful of living even in the neighbourhood. Therefore, uncared for and unattended by any one dear or near to him, the patient soon fell a prey to the disease.

Our Varier who was out to help and serve humanity found it a rare chance for him to prove the efficacy of Ayurvedic drugs. First, he tried to pacify people by explaining to them that it was unjust and cruel to neglect the suffering patient without giving him the much needed help and nursing to restore him to normalcy. When he found that people would not believe him, he himself began visiting the afflicted patients in their homes and to administer medicines. Even during nights he went from house to house and rendered all possible help to the patients. Though the women folk were the most terror-stricken of all, Kunhikutty Varasyar, our hero's beloved mother, kept calm. She was happy and thankful to God that her only son was of service to the suffering humanity at a critical time like that.

P. S. Varier, at that time, was trying to discover an effective remedy for cholera. He tried various drugs and did some careful research, delving deep into the hoary Ayurvedic lore. At last his perseverence struck at the right point and as a result, the now famous "Vishuchikari pills" of P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala saw the light of day and saved a large number of people. It was a "Wonder drug" of those days. Seeing that it was so very

essential that people knew everything about cholera, its causes and cure, he wrote and published a book in Malayalam on the subject.

The people of Kottakkal opened their eyes. They recognised the selfless services rendered by Varier. They now saw that he was an efficient and clever physician. And very soon Varier became a popular physician, loved and respected by people in his village and in the neighbouring areas.

In the course of his practice he realized the difficulties experienced by uneducated people taking home medicines from the Arya Vaidya Sala without proper knowledge of the correct dosage. In Allopathy, every drug and medicine had a prescribed and fixed dosage, determined after careful test. Varier's opinion was that Ayurveda also should fix some such standard dosage for every medicine. This thought set him to work. Though it was an unusually difficult and nerve-racking job for a single person to shoulder, Varier, within a few months, could prepare and publish his first catalogue in 1903 giving complete details of the usage, dosage and other information necessary for a lay man taking medicines without the help of a physician. That was the first catalogue of Ayurvedic preparations published in Malayalam. After four years, he published his "Chikitsa Samgraham", a big volume in the Malayalam language. It was a real guide to the public. The popularity and usefulness of that work is manifest from the fact that it is now running in its fifth edition which came out in 1953.

His book on cholera, his catalogue and the "Chikitsa Samgraha" opened the eyes of the discerning public. They helped to popularise Ayurveda in Kerala. Now that these publications gave useful and correct information to the literates and through them to a large circle of men and women who could not read, the quacks who had a free but dangerous play with the lives of human beings found their trade gradually dwindling.

When P. S. Varier started his Arya Vaidya Sala, the first employee to be taken into his service to help him was Cheriyam Veettil Kunhunni Nair. Next came Madathil Parangodan Nair who, though very old, continues in the service of the Vaidya Sala,

refusing to retire. Sri T. Krishna Menon alias Chinnan Menon, first to be appointed to a clerical post in the Vaidya Sala was the most trusted official and confidence keeper of his master. As the Vaidya Sala steadily grew into a big organisation, Chinnan Menon was promoted as Head Clerk, and later, as Cash keeper. Till the death of his beloved master he served him zealously. And on his death, Chinnan Menon became one of the Trustees of the Vaidya Sala in accordance with the provisions of P. S. Varier's will. Since the last many months, Menon is enjoying leave with full pay preparatory to retirement. Chinnan Menon was the recepient of several benefits from P. S. Varier, and on the day of Varier's Shashtyabda poorthy celebrations he received from his master a gold medal weighing two tolas.

M. Achyuthan Nair who, later, earned great fame for his histrionic talents, was the first assistant to Chinnan Menon. Achyuthan Nair was, in fact, the life of the P. S. V. Dramatic Company founded and fostered by P. S. Varier. On the death of his master, Achyuthan Nair left Kottakkal with a broken heart and settled down in his own village near Calicut, taking a vow never to see Kottakkal again. Now he gets a pension from the Arya Vaidya Sala every month.

C. Rama Varier who was in charge of collecting drugs, herbs and other raw materials for the Vaidya Sala was the first to be employed in the institution from the Varier community. His death in 1091 M. E. was an irreparable loss to P.S.Varier and the Vaidya Sala.

In the brief course of three years since its inception the Arya Vaidya Sala took rapid strides, creating confidence in the people and gaining in popularity. Even his shrewd mother nodded her approval at the success of her son and his Vaidya Sala. At its inception, even Varier had no expectations or hopes of making an average monthly sales of more than 300 Rupees. But in the very first year sales had exceeded 500 Rupees a month on an average. And steadily did this figure rise month after month, and year after year, until at last it reached more than Rs. 30,000 a month at the time of his death.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARYA VAIDYA SAMAJAM

KOTTAKKAL was a remote village. It had its own limitations. Varier was out to spread the message of Ayurveda throughout the country and, if possible, in foreign climes, too. If his Vaidya Sala's beneficent objects were to be confined only to the small village of Kottakkal it would not go far enough to resuscitate Ayurveda in other parts of the country. He was anxious that a number of good Vaidya Salas such as his own should spring up everywhere in the country, owned and supervised by honest and efficient Ayurvedic experts who were sincere in their desire to foster the great science and to take its noble message to the far corners of the globe. If that dream of his could be put into practice, he had no manner of doubt that the dawn of a new era would soon make its appearence in the horizon.

To achieve this object the efforts of one man alone would not suffice. He saw that the Ayurvedists should all join together and put their shoulders to the wheel. Even for that some one should take the initiative. While these thoughts were revolving in his mind, unexpectedly reached him an invitation from Sri. Vellanisseri Vasudevan Moosad of Kuttoor, a learned physician, to participate in the inauguration ceremony of his "Arogya Chintamani Vaidya Sala" at Kuttoor. When he glanced at the invitation, he jumped out of joy. Here was an opportunity; all the leading Vaidyas of

Kerala would congregate at Kuttoor on that occasion which could usefully be utilized to propound his idea among his compeers.

Here we get an insight into Varier's nobility and sincerity of purpose. It was a time when his Vaidya Sala was bringing him a considerable profit. Those were days when, as a commercial enterprise, the Vaidya Sala was slowly but surely developing into a big success that it afterwards became. It is seldom we come across a person who invites others to establish rival business organisations, knowing fully well that such rivals might bring down his custom and profits to a considerable extent. But Varier, when face to face with the bigger problem of the revival of Ayurveda was ready to sacrifice his all at the alter of that great science of healing brought down to us by the great Rishis of old.

As was expected, the occasion of the opening of the "Arogya Chintamani Vaidya Sala" brought many of the prominent Ayurvedic physicians of Kerala besides a large number of big landlords and eminent persons together at Kuttoor. P. S. Varier, the first in South India to organise a Vaidya Sala, was elected to the chair at the meeting held on the occasion . Every one assembled there fell in with the idea that the Vaidyas should organise themselves and that they should all meet together in conference at least once every year. And it was resolved to form an association of the Vaidyas of Kerala and to name it "the Arya Vaidya Samajam". On the invitation of P. S. Varier, it was also resolved to hold the first session of the Samajam at Kottakkal to frame the necessary rules and by-laws.

Accordingly, in the last week of January, 1903, the first conference of the Samajam was held on two consecutive days on a grand scale in the beautiful pandal erected in the premises of the Arya Vaidya Sala at Kottakkal. Sri Valiya Kunhianujan Raja, the fifth Prince of the Zamorin's family, presided over the first day's session; and on the second day, Vidwan P. C. Manavikrama Ettan Raja, an erudite scholar of the Zamorin's family, took the chair. All the leading Ayurvedists, many dignitaries and lovers of Ayurveda participated in the conference.

Rules and by-laws of the Samajam were framed and an Executive Committee was elected. P. S. Varier was chosen as the permanent Secretary; and the late Anantapurath Mootha Kovil Thampuran (Travancore) was elected as the permanent President. The Maharajas of Travancore and Cochin, and the Zamorin Raja of Calicut were the Patrons of the Samajam.

It was decided to hold an annual examination under the auspices of the Samajam and to give diplomas to the successful candidates.

The next session was held at Calicut on the initiative of the late Vidwan P. C. Manavikrama Ettan Raja at his own place at Calicut, early in 1904. This conference had some historical importance too in that two members of the Cochin Royal family had attended and participated in it. For centuries, the Cochin Royal family and the family of the Zamorins of Calicut were standing aloof from each other, nurturing the animosity between them which had played a significant part in the shaping of the history of Kerala as well as that of India till about the advent of the British power on the Indian scene. Not only the heads of these two Princely families refused to tread on the soil of the territories belonging to one another, but even the younger members had to follow the age-old aloofness. But now on the invitation of the Zamorin, the Maharaja of Cochin sent Prince Kunhunni Thampuran (the sixth Prince of Cochin) and Prince Rama Varma Appan Thampuran, a great scholar and *litterateur*, as his representatives to the conference at Calicut, thus breaking the old unsavoury practice and putting aside all thoughts of ill-will and feud his ancestors were harbouring against the Zamorins.

An important decision taken at this conference was to open an Ayurveda Oushadha Sala at Calicut under the auspices of the Samajam on the same lines as the Arya Vaidya Sala of Kottakkal. A committee to go into the question was appointed. The third session was held at Trichur in the Cochin State next year. The entire expenses of that session had to be borne by P. S. Varier himself, due to some unforseen circumstances. At this conference,

a committee of scholars was appointed to prepare text books in Malayalam for the use of those students who were not well versed in Samskrit. Unfortunately, that committee did not work. The fourth session was held at Badagara in North Malabar, and the fifth met in conference at Pattambi in South Malabar.

The Samajam was registered as a Society under the Societies' Registration Act XXI of 1860, in 1907.

The sixth session which was held at Palghat had an Ayurvedic Exhibition too as a part of it. The next session was at Kollengode in 1909, presided over by the late Pandit D. Gopalacharlu of Madras. This session was important in that it appointed a committee to take measures to institute an Ayurvedic College and Pharmacy in Malabar.

The eighth session was held at Tellicherry, and the ninth, for the second time, at Kottakkal. An exhibition also had been organised there. The next session held at Mankada in South Malabar in 1912 appointed a committee to take effective steps to open an Ayurvedic College in Malabar. But this committee also did not function properly.

Thus, for ten years, the Arya Vaidya Samajam held its annual conferences in different parts of Malabar and once in the Cochin State. These conferences roused the people even in the villages and helped to revive Ayurveda a good deal. The Samajam and its activities received great encouragement and enthusiastic support from a large number of distinguished persons in Kerala. No session could be held in Travancore during the first twelve years. Therefore, at the session held at Mankada it was decided that the activities of the Samajam should be spread on a greater scale in Travancore. But unfortunately, Ananthapurath Mootha Kovil Thampuran and Kerala Varma Valiya Kovil Thampuran, the two stalwarts who were rendering yeoman service to the Samajam in Travancore passed away one after the other within a brief interval of time, thereby dealing a terrible blow to the organisers of the Samajam.

At about this time, some friends who were actively helping the Samajam in the Cochin State started a similar organisation under the name of the "Keraleeya Ayurveda Samajam." There was sufficient reason to fear that two organisations with the same aims and objects working in contiguous areas like Malabar and Cochin might cause unhealthy rivalry which might end in the ruination of both. At the annual meeting of the Arya Vaidya Samajam held at Calicut it was resolved to appeal to the sponsors of the new organisation in the Cochin State to amalgamate both the bodies and to work together for the common cause. The appeal was not heeded.

Absence of proper leaders and organisers in Travancore, and the rise of a rival organisation in the Cochin State threw the whole burden of running the Arya Vaidya Samajam on the shoulders of a few devoted workers in Malabar headed by P. S. Varier. And ever since, thanks to the tireless and pioneering efforts of P. S. Varier the Samajam continued to hold its annual examination and meetings without a break.

Sri P. S. Varier was, from its very inception, meeting all the working expenses of the Samajam from his own pockets. Till his death in 1944, he was its permanent Secretary. And since his death that office was held by his nephew, the late lamented P. Madhava Warrier till the day of his tragic death on December 12, 1953, as the result of an air accident. The present Secretary of the Samajam is Arya Vaidyan Sri. P. V. Easwara Varier, Manager and physician of the Calicut branch of the Arya Vaidya Sala, a nephew-in-law and assistant of the late Vaidyaratnam Varier. The organisation now depends entirely on the munificent financial support of Vaidya-ratnam P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal.

The activities of the Arya Vaidya Samajam and the Arya Vaidya Sala kindled in the minds of the people new hopes and faith in the efficacy of Ayurveda. Interest in the ancient system of medicine was being roused and people became eager to learn details about the system. P. S. Varier knew that to keep up the

newly awakened interest in the lay public, some sort of education should be given to the people on the subject. With that aim in view he started editing and publishing the "DHANWANTHARI", a medical and health journal in Malayalam. He himself was its editor and publisher. His cousin P. V. Krishna Varier, scholar and poet, and editor of the "KAVANA KOUMUDI", a superb Malayalam poetical magazine (now extinct) ably assisted him. The late Vachaspathi T. C. Parameswaran Moosad, an erudite scholar. also was an assistant editor for some time.

The "Dhanwanthari" threw much light on the numerous problems of health and hygiene, and helped its readers to know many new things. P. S. Varier himself contributed very informative articles to it regularly. It was one of the very few good and useful periodicals of the time in Kerala. When, after some years, P. S. Varier felt that it was a great strain on his time to continue publishing this magazine along with his manifold activities connected with the Arya Vaidya Sala, the Ayurvedic College, the Dramatic troupe etc. and as there was none else to shoulder the responsibility ably, he was constrained to stop its publication. The Malayalam speaking public are the poorer indeed, by its non-appearence.

CHAPTER IX

THE LIGHT GOES OUT

IT was in the year 1906; four years after P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala saw the light of day. Varier's shrewd and capable mother, Kunhikutty Varasyar, who was minutely watchful of every step her son took was now happy that her son's enterprise was progressing rapidly and successfully. She had now the solace of her heart on seeing her only son becoming a popular and efficient physician rendering real service to the poor and the needy.

Things were going on smoothly. Varier was full of energy and in good spirits. But suddenly, one day in August 1936, Kunhikutty Varasyar took ill. Her son strained every nerve to give his darling mother all the best medical aid possible with the help of other physicians. Constantly did he sit by her side and nurse her with love and infinite care. Yet, in September 1906, the great lady, the light which was leading her son all these years, passed away peacefully in her sixty-eighth year.

Varier himself was ill at that time. But without causing any alarm either to his mother or others in the house he was always at his mother's bedside, nursing her. Her death was a heavy blow to him; in fact, the heaviest in his life. It made him very unhappy. It created for him a big void. To him, his mother was a friend, philosopher and guide, holding the bridle, leading him in the right

path. And he was in the highest degree obedient and dutiful to his mother. From his twelfth year, P. S. Varier had become the male head of the family which threw many responsibilities on him. But never had he occasion to feel the burden as his mother was virtually in sole charge of the whole show; and she was an adept in managing the affairs of the family on sound lines.

All the customary rites were duly performed by Varier with especial care on elaborate scale. The first anniversary was celebrated on a very grand manner, Varier spending about 2000 Rs. towards the expenses. On that occasion he gave "Guru Dakshinas" to Sri Konath Achyutha Varier and Sri Killimangalath Krishna Varier, both of whom were his teachers in the early stage of his education.

A very touching scene also was witnessed on the occasion. Mannil Kunhikrishnan Nair, then very old and infirm was, years ago, Kunhikutty Varasyar's servant specially entrusted with the task of looking after her little son (P. S. Varier). For several years Nair had taken very good and affectionate care of the young kid that Varier then was. Remembering the old man who had made him happy in his childhood days by narrating to him fairy tales and joining with him in his childish pranks, Varier had specially sent for him. After giving dakshinas to his old teachers, Varier stood before the old man and accosted him tenderly and placed in his trembling hands a few pieces of new cloth and some sovereigns; moreover, the young Varier prostrated before the bewildered old servant to the great amazement of the large number of guests assembled there. Kunhikrishnan Nair was spell bound. Tears rushed down his eyes and with quivering lips he muttered something, inaudible even to those close to him. May be he was offering prayers of blessings to the long prosperous life of his beloved "Kuttan."

After the Arya Vaidya Sala was opened and Varier settled down at Kottakkal, he had entered into wedlock. Varier had married a quiet, good natured girl from Desamangalath Aattoor Variyam. The two families were equal in social status and

friendly to each other. After the death anniversary of his mother was celebrated on an exceeding, sumptuous scale as aforesaid. Varier was just trying to pay deeper attention to his work. His wife was then an expectant mother. That gave him hopes and cheer. But alas! Inscrutable are the ways of God. Mrs. Varier gave birth to a sill-born babe; and within a few days she fell a victim to the consequent grief and ill-ness from which she never recovered. Mrs. Varier breathed her last in October, 1906, leaving her husband a prey to the most poignant grief and misery.

With the death of his wife he found himself alone, bereft of everything. He thought that he had no one to love him, none to take care of him and make his strenuous life happy and cheerful. Ever since, he remained a widower.

After the first shock of the grievous tragedy wore off Varier's spiritual mind began to see the hands of Providence working to shape his destiny as well as that of his Vaidya Sala. Now that he was alone, he determined to place his all at the feet of Ayurveda and at the service of his countrymen.

With the death of his mother the responsibility of the Karanavan (head) of the family heavily fell on him. There was no one who could manage the family affairs as capably as his mother. He entrusted his aunt (mother's younger sister) with all the monies and jewels that belonged to her and to the common family as well as those jewels of his mother. And he entrusted his cousin Krishna Varier with the management of the family affairs, taking particular care to pay from his own pockets whatever amounts were needed to make up the deficit. He made necessary and adequate arrangements for its future well-being and prosperity.

Throughout his career he took great care not to mix up the funds of his Vaidya Sala and his common family. Vaidya Sala was ever kept separate from the family, the former owing its existence entirely to his own individual efforts and being, in a sense, public property. The funds of the Arya Vaidya Sala was

intended by him mainly for the good of the common man and for the revival of Ayurveda.

While devoting much of his time, resources and life for the propagation of Ayurveda and for the progress of his Vaidya Sala, Varier, by precept and practice, proved himself to be a model "Karanavan" of a Malabar Marumakkathayam (matriarchal) family, loving all members of the family alike and always anxious for their welfare and prosperity.

In the year 1911, taking his aunt with him, he went on a pilgrimage to North India and performed "Sraddha" at Gaya for his departed parents.

CHAPTER X

REVIVAL OF THE MALAYALAM STAGE

SOMEWHERE about ,1908 a few enthusiastic young men of Kottakkal, under the lead of P. V. Krishna Varier, started a Malayalam dramatic troupe. They had rehearsed only one play. That was "Sangeetha Nyshadha" written by Sri T. C. Achyutha Menon. In a short while the organisers of the troupe became inactive. Among the actors were some of the employees of the Arya Vaidya Sala.

As has already been said, P. S. Varier had, in his younger days, learnt music. His histrionic talents also were not inconsiderable. Moreover, he was a lover of all fine arts. As such he was eager to give all possible encouragement to the local talents of Kottakkal. The deplorable state of the dramatic troupe there pained him, especially because the chief sponsor was his own cousin. It was a pleasure for him to see his employees utilizing and enjoying their spare hours in such a good manner. And therefore, if the troupe was totally to founder, Varier feared that his employees might take to other hobbies or recreations, sometimes vicious and discreditable, bringing in its wake disrepute even to his Vaidya Sala.

It did not take him long to decide that he should himself take up the responsibility of organising and managing the troupe, and to try to bring in all talented youths of Malabar under a sound

organisation. More, during certain seasons, especially in summer months when work in the manufacturing section of his Vaidya Sala was not heavy due to the dearth in medicinal herbs and allied ingredients, the number of workmen needed was limited. Yet, he was anxious to retain all his employees all the time lest unemployment brought them and their families distress and misery. He considered it unjust and sinful to deprive his dependents of a proper living. The revival of the dramatic troupe would give them some work. Therefore, he decided to take up and organise the troupe himself on sound and proper lines as an adjunct to the Arya Vaidya Sala. And without losing a moment, he founded his "Parama Siva Vilasa Dramatic Company". He was himself its proprietor and director.

At that time besides Achyutha Menon's "Sangeetha Nyshadha", "Saranjanee Parinayam" and "Sadaram" were the only two other stories which could go by the name of Malayalam dramas. As there was no good dramatic troupe functioning on well-organised and well-equipped lines in Kerala, Tamil drama companies were reaping a rich harvest in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore by their periodical visits to this region. The Malayalees have always been an intelligent and talented class; and they could, any day, vie with the actors of any other part of the country. Kerala is the rich home of Kathakali, superb as an art which has now earned international praise and repute.

Varier took a vow as it were that along with his task of reviving Ayurveda, he would do his utmost for the revival of the Malayalam stage also. He saw that with its revival, it had to be improved a lot, modernised and brought on a par with the first-rate dramatic companies in the other parts of India. It was imperative to organise the troupe on sound basis, bestowing great attention in fostering strict descipline and excellent character among the members of the troupe. Varier spared no efforts to keep his ideal before him.

Those were days when the general public liked dramas with songs interspersed in between dialogue in prose. Most of the

actors of his company were, at first, novices in the art of music, and it was an up-hill task for Varier to inculcate in their minds the necessity and importance of keeping in harmony the "*tala*" and "*swara*" of songs besides exhibiting the appropriate "*bhavas*" and "*rasas*" in their actions. Varier proved himself a first-rate Director of the stage. No wonder, his patience and perseverence in moulding raw hands, shaping them into excellent actors brought to his dramatic company a high reputation all over Kerala in the span of a few years.

As soon as he organised his troupe the first thing he did was to construct a proper stage adjacent to the hall in his Vaidya Sala. M. Achyuthan Nair, a clerk in the Vaidya Sala, who, later, became famous as an actor, was playing the leading role in almost all the plays the Company had staged. Varier had appointed expert musicians to teach music to the actors, while he was himself mainly responsible in teaching them actions and directing them on the stage. When he found that appropriate scenery and other colourful equipments on the stage attracted and drew more visitors to the theatre he engaged A. Narayana Pisharody, a good artist, as his scenographer.

As he progressed in his work, dearth of Malayalam plays embarrassed him. To keep his Company going it was highly necessary to have at least a dozen plays. He was in a fix. What could he do? Varier's fertile brain did not take long to find a way out. He decided to become a playwright himself! Why not? He had considerable musical talents; he had good literary tastes, too. Therefore, if he tried, he knew that he could become a good composer and an excellent dramatist. Soon he began writing plays. First, he started with Kalidasa's "*Sakuntalam*" translating it from Samskrit into Malayalam as a musical drama, fit to be staged in three different parts. Next, he took up the "*Kasi Ghatta*" and the "*Smasana Ghatta*" of "*Harischandra Charitha*" translating them from Tamil; and the "*Ayodhya Ghatta*" of the same story was written in Malayalam taking its Samskrit version as his basis. With the assistance of some friends he wrote many more plays with their stories from the puranas.

Now that he has had a good number of plays ready, with attractive stage equipments, he asked himself whether he was to rest content with exhibiting the commendable talents of his actors and artists within the confines of a small, interior village like Kottakkal. If his main object of working for the revival of the Malayalam stage was to progress, he knew that it was necessary that his troupe should be an itinerant one visiting at least the important places in Kerala. And now he was well-equipped for the task.

He chose Tirur, nine miles from Kottakkal, as the first place outside his village. It was in the year 1912. The great success of the Company there gave him very great encouragement. So from there he moved on to Calicut, the capital of the Malabar District and a big town. And from that year the P. S. V. Dramatic troupe used to visit all the important places in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore every year, and won laurels and encomiums from everywhere.

When he realized the need of having his own theatres in some important towns of Malabar, he constructed the P. S. V. Hall in the premises of the Arya Vaidya Sala branch at Calicut, and later, acquired a hall at Palghat in the same premises of his Vaidya Sala there, so that his troupe could perform as and when he pleased, without let or hindrance.

In the first few years, the P. S. V. Dramatic troupe had only Malayalam plays to their credit. But in the course of their tours they saw that Tamil dramas also were in demand. And Fate brought to P. S. Varier a child prodigy in A. C. Achyuthan Nair, a young boy in his teens who had already made a mark on the Tamil stage as a member of the famous Madura Bala Meena Ranjani Sabha. The boy came to Varier for consultation, anxious to get cured of some illness. Varier cured the boy in a short time; and afterwards, he persuaded Achyuthan Nair to join the P. S. V. Dramatic Company as an actor. It was with this boy's assistance, that P. S. Varier tought his troupe a number of Tamil plays. Grateful that he was, P. S. Varier decided to make

Achyuthan Nair a good physician and taught him Samskrit and Ayurveda. Nair took his certificate of "Arya Vaidyan" from the Arya Vaidya College at Kottakkal. He is now the branch Manager and physician of the Arya Vaidya Sala at Erode.

When demands came for Hindustani songs from the audience in some places, P. S. Varier deputed a trusted musician of his to North India to study the Hindustani system. Later, with the help of that musician, he composed a number of songs according to that style and introduced them aptly in some of his plays. Thus we see P. S. Varier in many roles: as an efficient Director, eminent playwright and able composer. From his own experience he visualized the changes needed to make the Malayalam stage attractive. And he introduced many improvements to suit the modern tastes. He was, no doubt, a pioneer in the field. And rightly can we call him "the Saviour of the Malayalam Stage".

Many of the actors of the P. S. V. Dramatic Company had earned a name as great actors. C. P. Kuttikrishna Menon, M. Sekharan Nair, M. Sekhara Panikkar and R. S. Poduval, all of whom are no more now, and M. Achyuthan Nair, and a few others could claim proud places on the Malayalam stage. Mention may be made of K. V. Soolapani Varier who helped P. S. Varier in the efficient management of the Company. He continues to be the Manager of the P. S. V. Natya Sangham to this day.

For thirty long years, from 1909 to 1939, Varier's Dramatic Company had a glorious career. It was then that the "Talkies" invaded the field, capturing the minds of the masses everywhere. The cinema and the talkie were cheap entertainments to the masses as well as the classes. These attracted people from the stage to the screen. And it had an adverse effect on the P. S. V. Dramatic Company, too.

P. S. Varier surveyed the situation. He advised himself to look ahead and not to plunge his well-organised troupe into a fiasco. At that time, thanks to the efforts of Poet Vallathol and his Kerala Kala Mandalam, Kathakali had begun to attract the attention of the world. P. S. Varier who was himself a Kathakali

musician and an expert resolved that the members of his dramatic troupe should be taught Kathakali, too, side by side with drama. And he began work in the new field. In October, 1939, the Parama Siva Vilasa Dramatic Company became the "P. S. V. Natya Sangham".

He chose his men for the Natya Sangha from the Dramatic troupe as well as from outside, and formed an excellent and well-equipped Kathakali troupe. Till his death he was its Director. And in his later years he devoted a good deal of his time and attention on this subject making it one of the most efficient Kathakali Sanghas in India. And today, even after his death, the P. S. V. Natya Sangha continues to be one of the best.

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CHAPTER XI

THE ARYA VAIDYA COLLEGE

A previous chapter gave some account of the numerous hardships experienced by Varier and his fellow-desciples who studied Ayurveda at the *Gurukula*. The number of learned Ayurvedic scholars, in those days, was few and far between. And those who were great scholars were all the Ashta Vaidyas and their few scattered desciples. Ashta Vaidyas were orthodox Nambudiri Brahmins. They did not, ordinarily, take in desciples who were not of their own community. But as years rolled on, gradually they showed a willingness to teach such of those who were their close dependents and who belonged to the *Ambalavasi* (those like the Variers who served in temples) community. But such students had to experience the afore-said difficulties at the *Gurukula* if they wanted to learn the science.

While he was in the *Gurukula*, leading a strenuous life, P. S. Varier was dreaming of a well-organised institution where students from all classes and creeds with a real desire to learn Ayurveda could go and fulfill their ambition without having to undergo any of the rigours of a "*Gurukula*", and he pictured himself in his mind as the prime organiser of that institution. It was, of course, an ambitious dream of a young school boy; a vision reflected on the mind of one who was tasting bitter experiences.

Even after he left the *Gurukula* this dream lingered in his mind. He was anxious to help those who wanted to learn Ayurveda and thereby propagate the ancient science.

At the annual session of the Arya Vaidya Samajam held at Kollengode, Pandit D. Gopalacharlu presiding, the question of opening an Ayurveda Padha Sala in Malabar had been mooted for the first time. Later, in 1912, a committee to go into the question had been appointed at Mankada. But nothing was done by them. Varier was very unhappy that so long the Samajam could do nothing in the matter. He asked himself whether he could not raise a school for the purpose on his own. But though the wish was there he had not the wherewithal to shoulder such a big burden all by himself. At last he decided to start out on a propaganda and collection campaign to raise funds for an Ayurveda Padha Sala, devoting all his time for the purpose. He suspended all other work, and the whirl-wind campaign undertaken with a great will and determination brought encouragement to him from many sources. Though when Varier himself personally approached for donations many leading personages and rich landlords had promised him help, a large number of promises were broken when actually time to start the institution arrived. But P. S. Varier did not lose hopes.

A branch of his Vaidya Sala had been opened at Calicut in October 1916, in a newly constructed building in his own premises there. Varier's idea was to open the proposed Padha Sala also at Calicut. Accordingly, he constructed a building adjacent to the branch of the Vaidya Sala at Calicut to house the Padha Sala.

At two special meetings of the Arya Vaidya Samajam held at Calicut in 1917 with Vaidyaratnam K. Parameswaran Moos and Ashta Vaidyan Eledath Thykkat Divakaran Moos respectively in the chair, details in regard to the curriculam, syllabus and working arrangements of the Padha Sala were settled. And on January 14, 1917, the auspicious *Makara Sankranti* day, the Arya Vaidya College was inaugurated by the Zamorin Maharaja of Calicut. The late Prince Kochunni Thampuran of the Cochin

Royal family, that famous toxicologist and scholar, presided on the occasion. Thus was fulfilled a long-cherished dream of P. S. Varier.

Of the sixty odd applications received for admission in the first batch of the Padha Sala, forty-two were selected. The students had to pay no fee except the admission fee of Rs. 5/- Sri P. S. Varier was the Principal of the College till the day of his death. Sri P. P. Kammaran Nambiar, a good scholar and a learned Ayurvedist, and Vaidya Visarada P. K. Ramunni Menon were the first two to be appointed as the teachers in the institution. The latter has continued to serve the College in varied capacities, and since the death of Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier in 1944, he became and still continues to be the Principal. From the second year onwards, the services of Dr. E. Rama Varier L. M. & S. were secured to teach Anatomy and Physiology. Dr. N. S. Venkitachala Iyer L. M. & S. also had rendered invaluable services to the institution for a long time.

The College has a four-year course of studies. Those who pass the final examination in the fourth year are awarded by the Arya Vaidya Samajam the certificate of "*Arya Vaidyan*". At first, after the fourth year, students had to go to Kottakkal to take training in the manufacturing section of the Arya Vaidya Sala and to gain practical experience in the methods of treatment under the direct guidance of P. S. Varier for one year. It was in the year 1921 that the first batch of "*Arya Vaidyans*" came out from their *Alma Mater* to serve humanity and to spread the message of Ayurveda.

The Arya Vaidya Samajam, under whose auspices the College is managed, has a fixed deposit of Rs. 5,000 with their bankers. The institution has no other source of income except the interest accruing on the amount and the small amount received annually from students as admission fee. To run the College on efficient lines these paltry amounts were quite inadequate. And to meet the recurring expenditure every year, P. S. Varier freely spent from his own funds. And in fact, though the management is vested in the Samajam, the institution has ever been dependent on the

munificence and loving care of P. S. Varier ever since its inception. And with a view to helping it march forward from progress to progress even after his death, Vaidyaratnam Varier had made ample provisions in his last will and testament enjoining the Board of Trustees of the Arya Vaidya Sala whom he had appointed under his will to render financial assistance to the College by utilising ten per cent of the annual profits of the Vaidya Sala.

When P. S. Varier opened his Charitable Hospital at Kottakkal in 1924, he thought that if the College was shifted from Calicut to Kottakkal, it could take advantage of the hospital, facilitating the students to gain more practical knowledge and experience in hospital work, and enabling him (Varier) to devote more time and better attention to work in the College. Therefore, he soon constructed at his expense suitable buildings adjacent to the Hospital to house the College, and in the same year, the College was shifted to Kottakkal. This change, of course, unbalanced things for a time. A poor, interior village like Kottakkal could not provide the students with all facilities for boarding, lodging and other amenities which they could get in a big town like Calicut. This caused a perceptible fall in the strength of the College when it was opened in its new environs. P. S. Varier realized the difficulties of the students who had no homes of their own at Kottakkal. Therefore, he decided to give monetary aid to all those who needed it. This changed the course of the wind! Students came from far and near seeking admission, and the strength went up steadily year after year, until at last Varier was obliged to introduce an element of descrimination between student and student, selecting only the poor and deserving.

The course of studies here is based on Ayurvedic principles. But in 1927, when a Doctor qualified in the modern system of medicine was appointed as physician and surgeon in his Charitable Hospital, students were given training in some of the methods of the modern system also. And since the past few years, lessons in Toxicology are also imparted here.

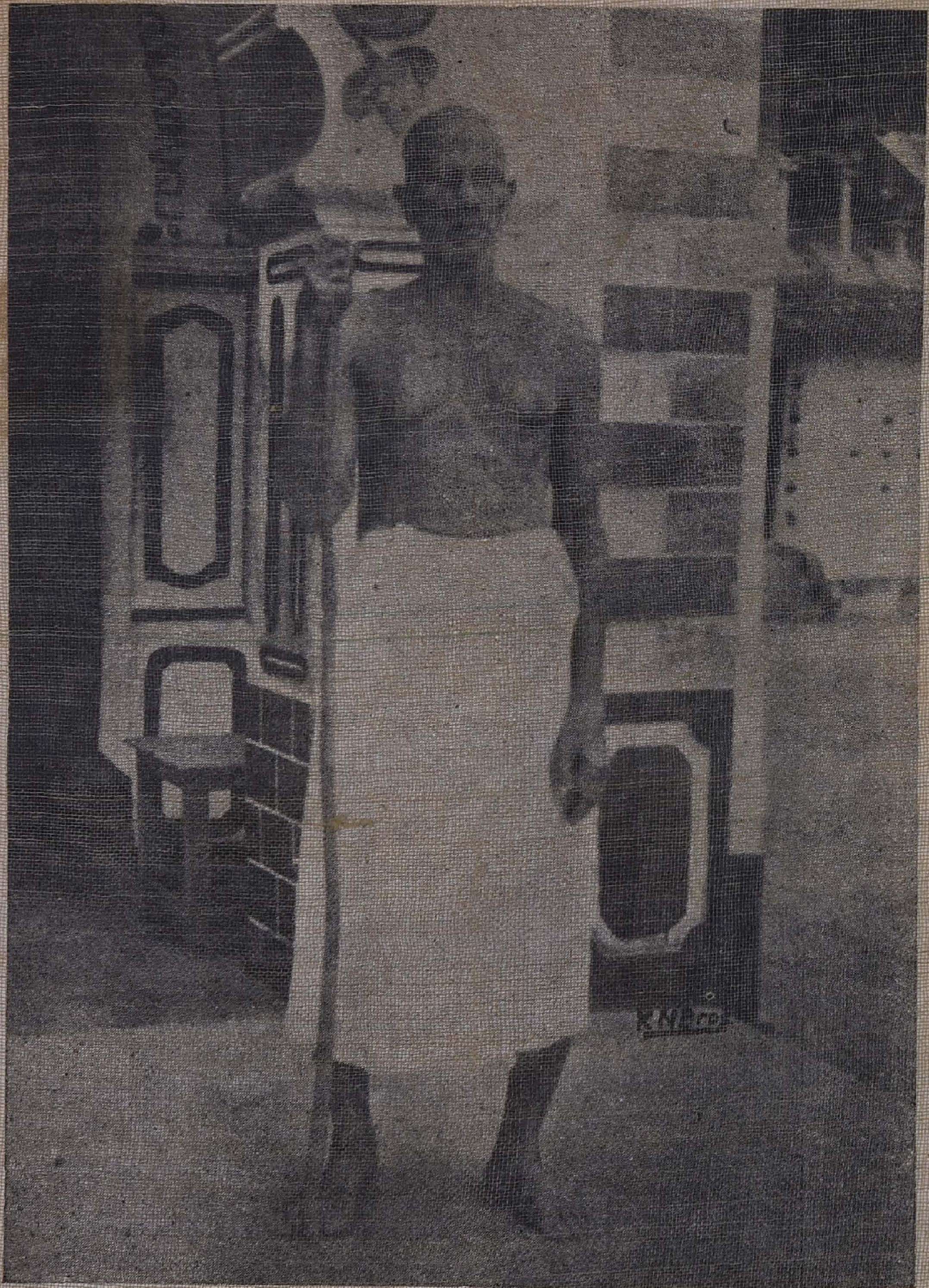
Formal recognition was given to the College by the Government in 1947, enabling the "Arya Vaidyans" to become

Registered Medical Practitioners. In tune with its progress, the institution had to be enlarged and new buildings put up. And from the year 1939, when cost of maintainance went up rapidly out of all proportions due to the second World war, the management was constrained to levy an annual fee of 12 Rs. from each student.

Till his death, P. S. Varier functioned as the lecturer in "*Sareera Sastra*" (Anatomy and Physiology) ever since the College was established at Kottakkal. In the course of this work he experienced great difficulty on account of the dearth of suitable text books on the subject in Malayalam. There were good books in English written by experts. He began to translate freely from them and to publish a series in the "Dhanwanthari" magazine. He did not rest content with that. Books in Malayalam could be useful only to those who knew that language. To reach a wider field of students he thought it necessary to write in Samskrit. There were great works in Samskrit on the subject treated strictly on Ayurvedic principles. But Varier wished to go a step farther; his idea was to write according to the Ayurvedic principles, taking advantage of the advanced studies and researches made by the modern scientists and scholars. He named his work the "*Brihat Saareera*". It contains eight parts with 108 chapters, each dealing respectively with the following: Hystology, Osteology, Syndesmology, Myology, Angiology, Neurology, Splanchnalogy and Physiology. The first volume was published by him in 1942.

For the use of students of Ayurveda, he wrote and published in 1925 his "*Ashtanga Saareera*" in Samskrit which received a certificate of merit and great encomium at the session of the All India Ayurvedic Congress held at Jaipur in 1926, presided over by our Scholar-politician, the late Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

Chinnan Menon (The first to be Employed
as Clerk—Now a Trustee)



Parangodan Nair
(One of the first employees of the Vaidyasala, still in service)

P. S. V. Dramatic Troupe with Director P. S. Varier

P. S. V. Natyasangh (Kathakali)

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CHAPTER XII

CALM IN THE MIDST OF STORM

THE Arya Vaidya Sala was making rapid strides year after year. And its founder P. S. Varier endeared himself to the people of all classes and creeds everywhere in Malabar, and especially to the masses belonging to all communities and religious faiths in Kottakkal and its neighbouring areas. He was loved by the poor and the down-trodden in his village. Because, his charity knew no bounds.

As his Vaidya Sala prospered, he recognised the need of opening a charitable Hospital at Kottakkal. And he started with the plans of its construction. But lo! the whole Ernad Taluk of which Kottakkal was a part was, in an instant, engulfed in a huge and unprecedented conflagration!

The first World war had ended bringing in its wake big scarcity conditions, unemployment, economic turmoil and consequent distress among the poorer classes. Ernad had sent a large contingent of young men, especially those belonging to the brave Mopla (Muslim) community, to the Army. When the war ended and soldiers were disbanded from the Army, the ex-servicemen returned to their homes unemployed. They who knew nothing but plenty and abundance in food and provisions while in the Army were now face to face with poverty and starvation. The existing economic discontent in the rural parts added to the misery. It was at this

juncture that on the 20th of August, 1921, that a police force raided the mosque at Tirurangadi in the Ernad Taluk, a few miles from Kottakkal, to search for certain suspected offenders of the law. This at once set aflame the religious feelings of the Mopla community in Malabar. In one moment the Moplas of the whole Taluk rose in revolt and the conflagration quickly spread to many parts of Malabar. Though at first the rising seemed to be only against the police and the Government, it still remains a mystery how it turned against the Hindu population in a short while. Whatever be the causes, it was a fact that for many months the life of no Hindu was safe.

Soon rumours were afloat that after demolishing the Puthur bridge at Kottakkal, just a half mile from the Arya Vaidya Sala, the rebels were planning to advance on the Palace and the other strongholds of the Hindus at Kottakkal. P. S. Varier was anxious to avoid any such mishap to the people there. He determined to use his influence among the Moplas of the locality. At about this time the Muslims of Kottakkal and its environs had assembled in large numbers at the Kottakkal bazaar, a few hundred yards from the Arya Vaidya Sala, to consider their plans. A daring messenger from P. S. Varier stepped into their midst and approaching the leader, said that his master – P. S. Varier – wanted to see him. The moment the message was delivered, with the leader at their head, a huge procession of Moplas marched to the Arya Vaidya Sala to the great consternation of the onlookers. Varier met them calmly at his gates and made a harangue to them advising them not to create trouble, ruining themselves and their own kith and kin. In reply, the leader assured Varier that his men would keep the peace, and he requested him to help them keep the wolf from their door. P. S. Varier gladly gave them money. And the rebels at once melted away from the scene.

Varier, with great presence of mind, saved the situation which, otherwise would have ruined the whole village and taken the lives of many innocent people. The rebels set fire only to Government buildings such as the Post Office and Sub Registry Office at Kottakkal. A very large number of women and children who had

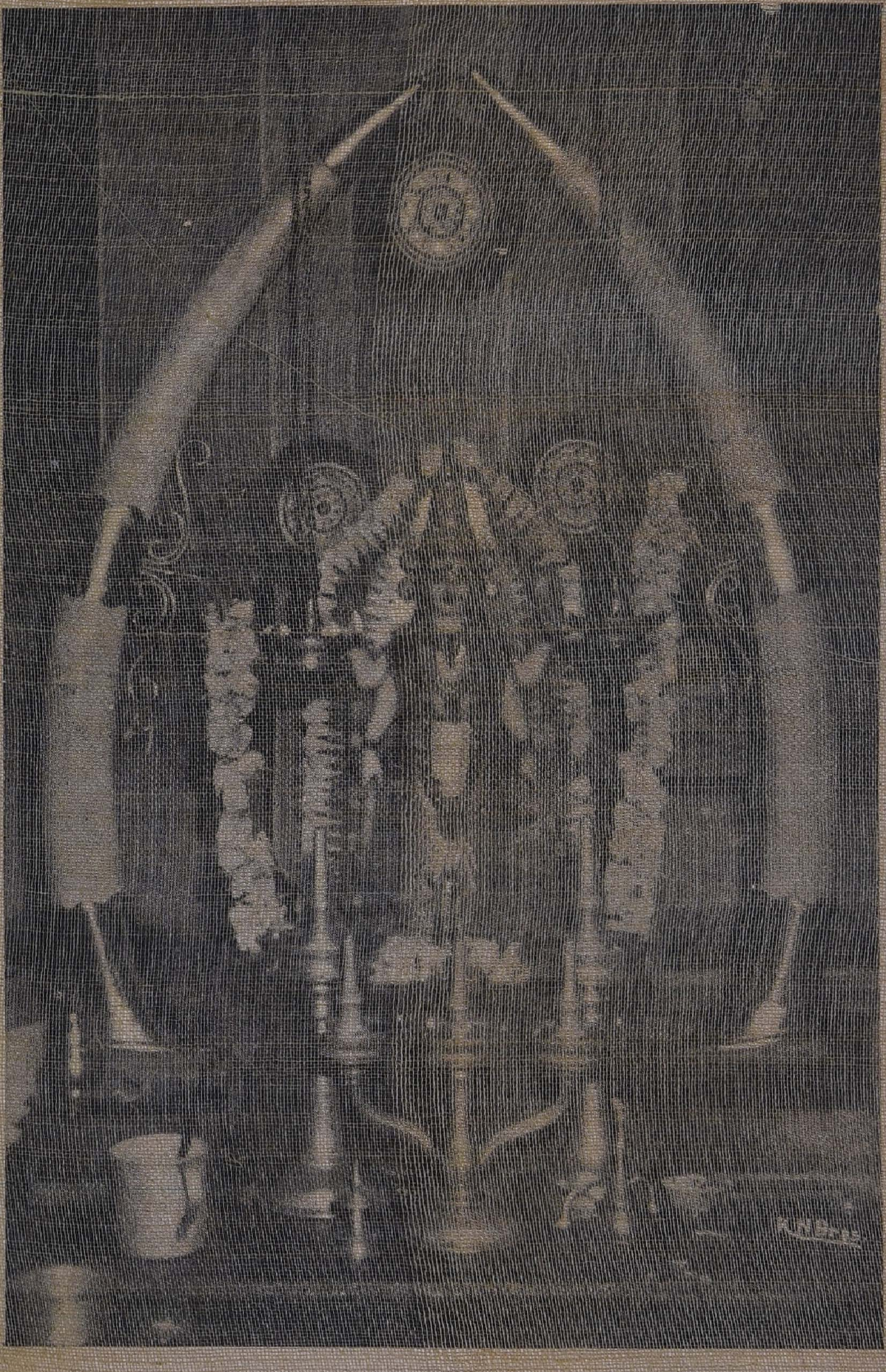
fled from their homes in and near Kottakkal had taken refuge in the Kottakkal Palace and in the Arya Vaidya Sala. They were also saved. Whenever there were signs of unrest among the Moplas guarding the Palace, P. S. Varier got scent of it and instantly appearing on the scene with his cousin Krishna Varier and nephew-in-law, the late K. V. Sankara Varier, pacified them. On account of the Rebellion all sorts of activities in the Ernad Taluk were at a stand—still for a long time. But except for a day or two, P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala could, without let or hindrance, carry on its work. The very term "Varier" was a safe passport in those days in the Taluk, and that helped not only the civil population in and near Kottakkal but also proved to be of inestimable help to the officers of the Government. P. S. Varier's car which had a safe passage all through, helped many officials, women and children, and even the mail bags of the Post Office, to go to their respective destinations from Kottakkal. And it may be remembered that all records and monies of the Post Office at Kottakkal were in the safe custody of P. S. Varier during the "Reign of Terror". To the hundreds of Hindus who had taken refuge in his Vaidya Sala, Varier gave all help including food and money. And a large number of the Police force camping at Kottakkal for many months to quell any future disturbances had the pleasure of being Varier's guests. It was only when the Servants of India Society appeared on the scene and began to organise relief work that P. S. Varier could put down the huge load from his head.

The help and kind services he rendered to the Mopla community during the troublous days are memorable. Many of the innocent Moplas had entrusted Varier with their jewels and other valuables when the trouble started. One remarkable incident which would help to throw light on Varier's sense of justice, nobility and kindness is note-worthy. When G. K. Devadhar, President of the Servants of India Society, visited Kottakkal in connection with the relief work soon after tranquillity was restored in the area, he heartily congratulated Varier for his great services. In reply, Varier said that it was time that relief was given to the

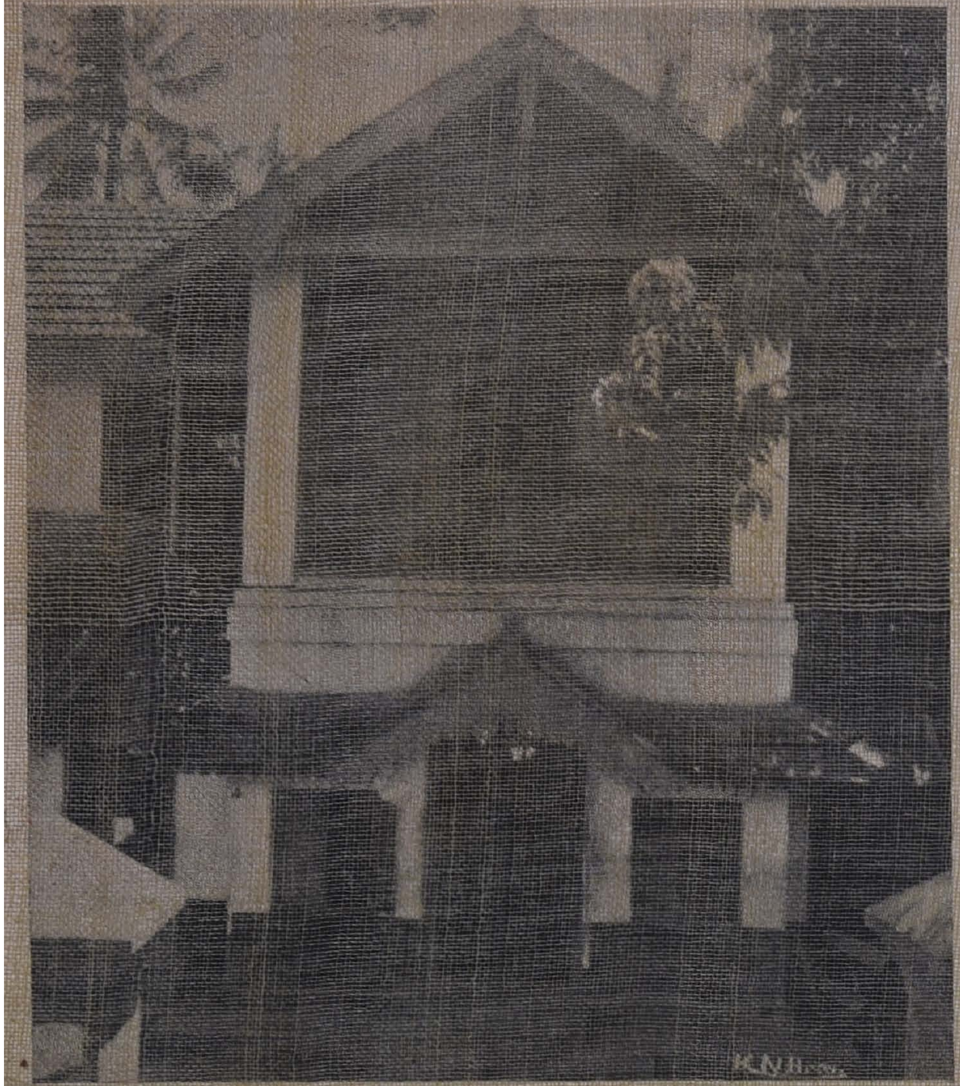
Mopla women and children, too! Devadhar was surprised to hear this from a Hindu. He asked Varier as to what made him plead for kindness to the Moplas who were regarded as the cause of all trouble. Varier replied, "It was the male members of the community who created all the havoc; women and children who were innocent of the crime are actually starving and leading a miserable existence. Therefore, human kindness and justice require help to them."

It was the first occasion during his long sojourn in Malabar that Mr. Devadhar heard any one speaking in sympathy with the Moplas. Every one else could speak of the community only with horror and hatred. Mr. Devadhar admired Varier's attitude and wrote about it in the "Times of India" in glowing terms.

Varier had appealed to the Government also to help the innocent Mopla women and children. No wonder, the Moplas of Kottakkal ever remember with gratitude their great Saviour—P. S. Varier.

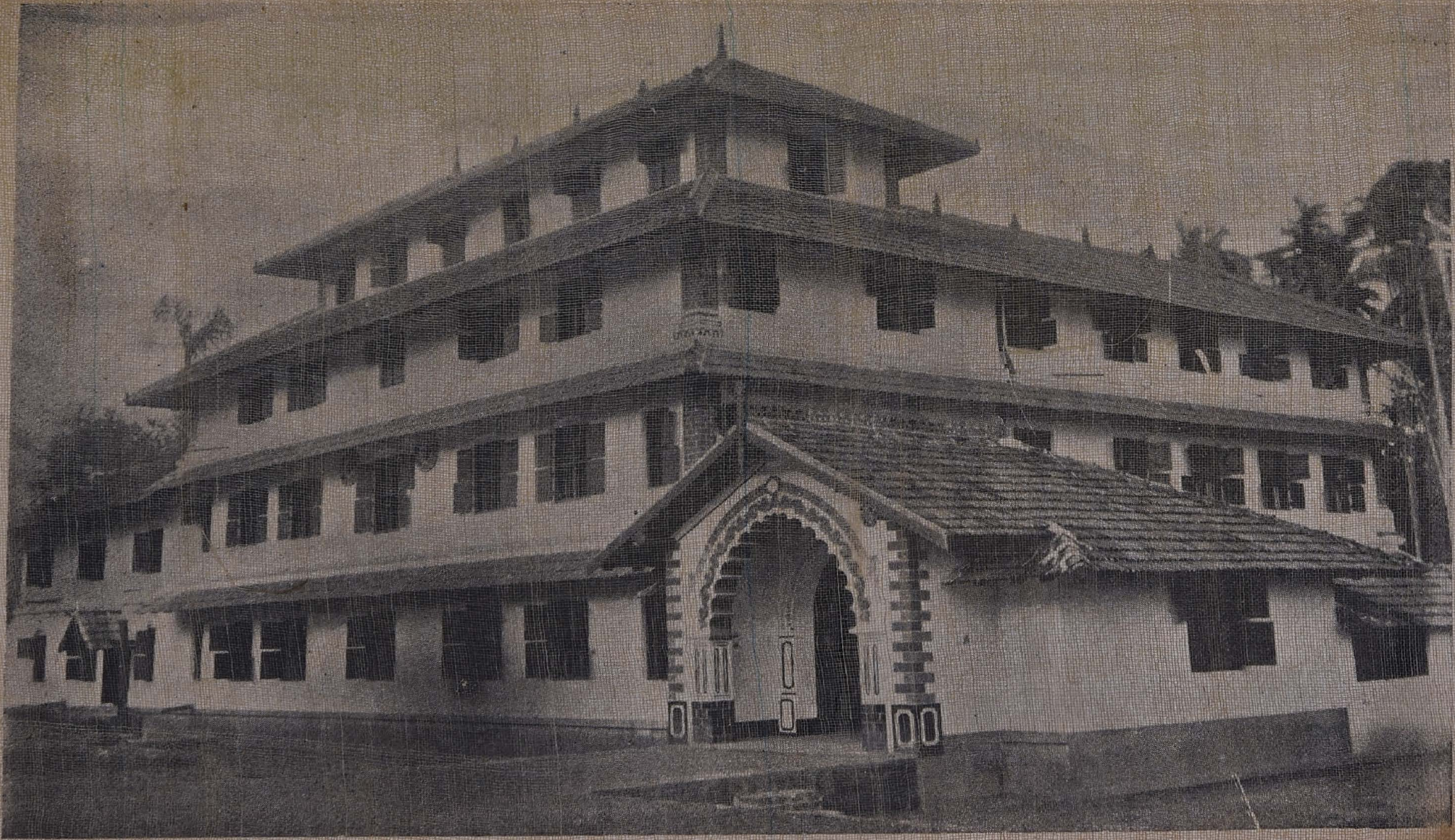


The "Sanctum Sanctorum" of the "Viswambhara" temple constructed by P. S. Varier in the courtyard of "Kailasa Mandiram."

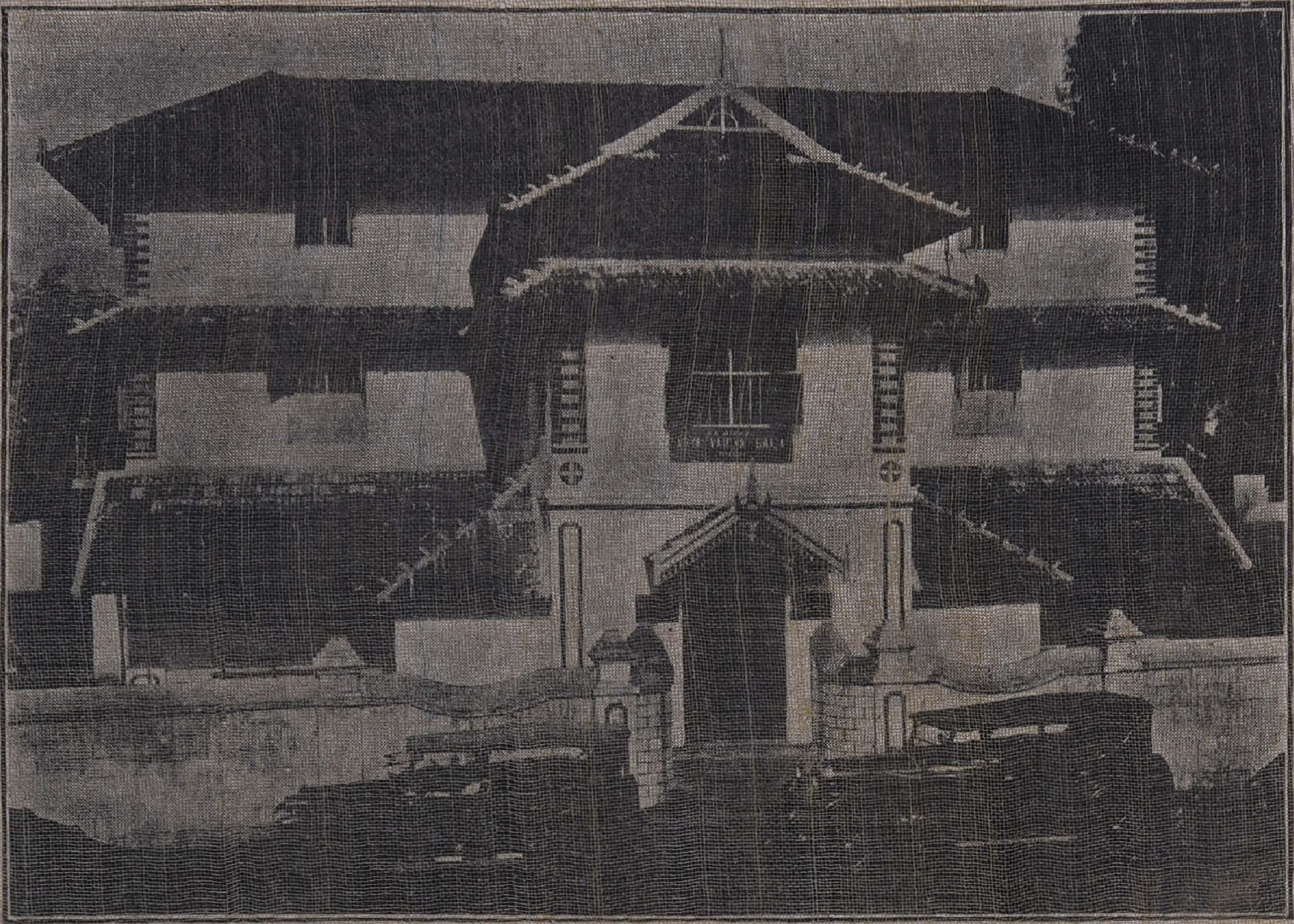


One section of the office

Tirur branch of the Arya Vaidya Sala



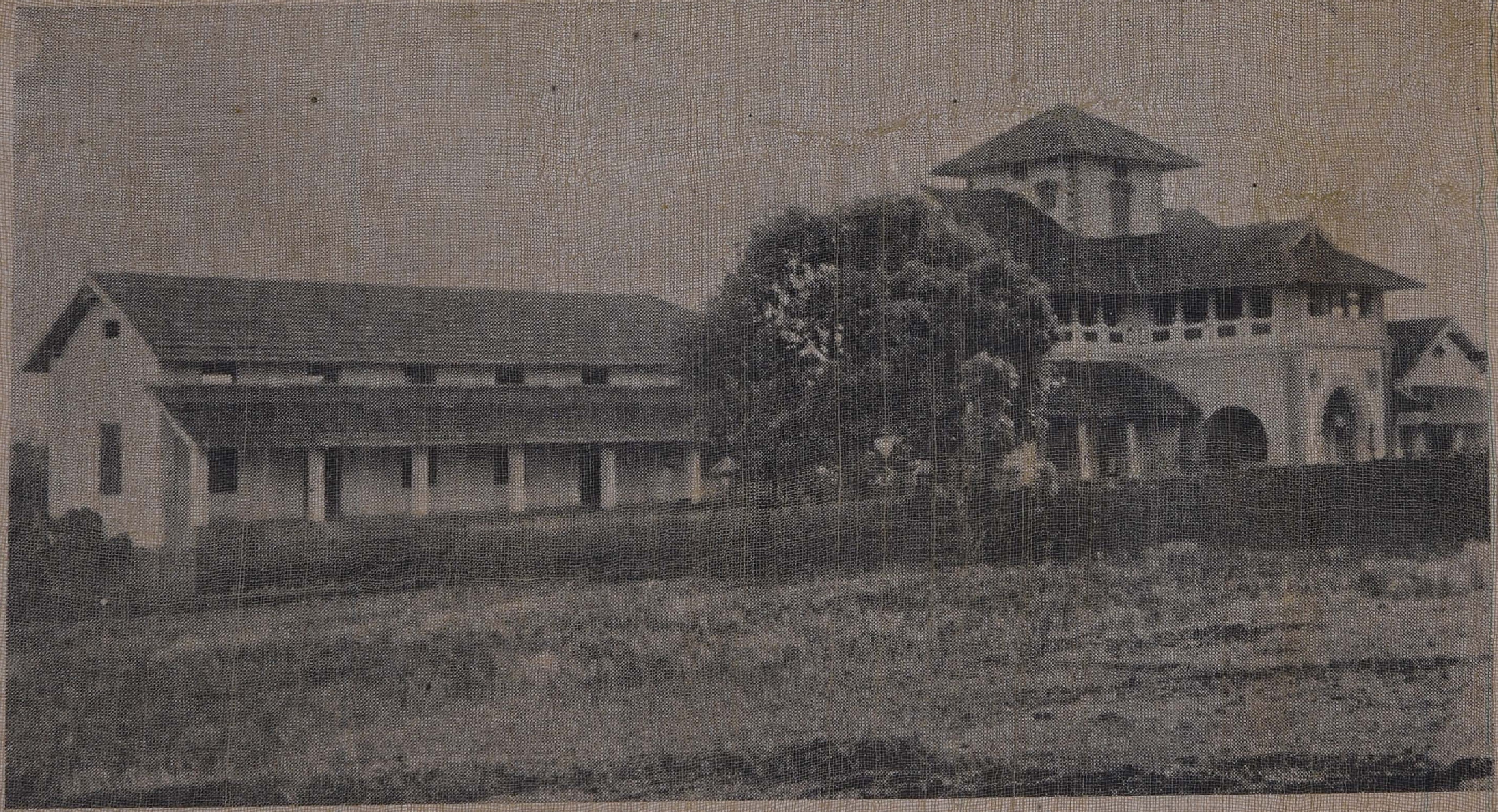
Kailaśa Mandiram (The palatial residence constructed by P. S. Varier) Now the residence of the Chief Physician & Mg. Trustee



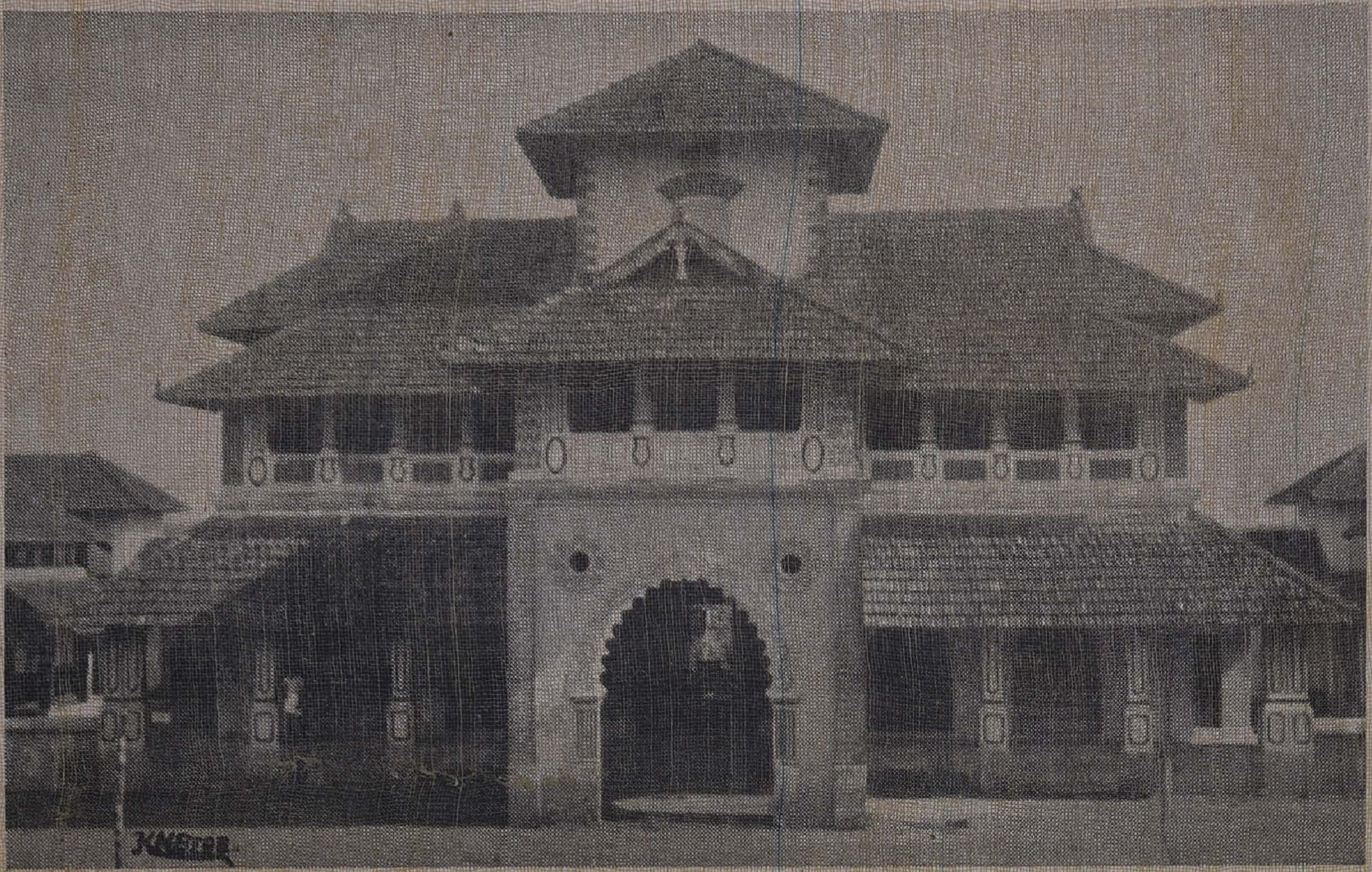
The Palghat branch of Arya Vaidya Sala

View of the Laboratory from out side

Calicut Branch



The Ayurvedic College and Hospital (Front View)



The Ayurvedic Hospital, Kottakkal

CHAPTER XIII

CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

P. S. VARIER was working hard for the past few months very successfully to keep Kottakkal and the surrounding areas out of the devastating storm, and to render relief to the refugees. An atmosphere of calm had just begun to make its appearence after the rebellion had been put down by the Government with the aid of a strong Gurkha Regiment. Varier thought that he could now get some rest. But, no!

The crisis had helped to prove the tremendous influence P. S. Varier wielded over the Moplas of Kottakkal. A handful of interested and "green-eyed" people there who could not brook the steadily rising popularity of Varier and his Arya Vaidya Sala thought that here was an opportunity for them to hit at Varier. His influence over the Moplas, they hoped, would bring him into trouble with the authorities. Anonymous letters were sent to high Governmental quarters saying that P. S. Varier was helping the rebels secretly, and that himself and his cousin Krishna Varier were ardent Khilaphat agitators, and that if Varier's rising influence and power were not curbed at once he would again engender bitter feelings in the minds of the illiterate Moplas against the Government. Turning to the other side, they tried to make the Moplas believe that P, S. Varier was their arch-enemy who had helped the Government against them. But such instigations were of no avail. The

Government officers on the spot and the Moplas of Kottakkal were convinced of Varier's *bona fides* and his great services.

P. S. Varier knew that he was passing through a combination of evil stars according to his horoscope. It was at this juncture that K. S. Varier, his most trusted desciple who was then physician and Manager of the branch of the Arya Vaidya Sala at Calicut, suddenly fell ill and died. It was a heavy blow to P. S. Varier as the disceased was not only very faithful and loving to him, but was also extremely capable and efficient. And in another brief period, another trusted employee of his, E. Sankunni Varier, who had been in charge of the Calicut branch on the death of K. S. Varier, also died quite unexpectedly. To add to these, many of Varier's employees also fell ill, one after another. It was, indeed, a very trying time for him. But his faith in God stood him in good stead. He knew that good actions and selfless service to humanity were the only things in this world which could help to avert the ill effects of evil doers and in all adversities.

At that time there was no hospital, not even a dispensary at Kottakkal, or anywhere near about maintained by the Government or, the Local Board, or by any public-spirited citizen. Not only the poorer classes but the rich and well-to-do also suffered immense difficulties on this account. The nearest hospitals were at Tirur and at Malappuram, miles away from Kottakkal. Therefore, even emergent cases requiring admission in and treatment at hospital had to wait as there was no quick transport facilities in those days. Buses were an unknown commodity everywhere in Malabar then. And many patients were known to have died on their way to the distant Hospitals from Kottakkal.

This sorrowful plight of his village gave him no peace of mind. He felt that it was his duty to solve the problem by opening a small hospital for the benefit of the villagers. With this as his object, he had begun the construction of a building in a spacious compound on the Western side of the Kottakkal Bazaar. But the sudden uprising of the Moplas forced him to suspend the work. When calm was restored, construction of the Hospital building soon

commenced and work was completed in 1924. The main building of the Hospital, though of modest size, has a good appearence. There are small wards, suited to the class of people for whom they are mainly intended, behind the main building. P. S. Varier named the Hospital, "the Arya Vaidya Chikitsa Sala".

The poor and the needy are admitted there as in-patients and treatment given to them free of all charges. Out-patients also are treated freely there. At first, the Hospital was in charge of an Ayurvedist. But when a seperate section for the modern system was opened there in June 1927, a qualified physician and surgeon in Allopathy became the Hospital Superintendent. And ever since, the Hospital has two sections—the Ayurvedic and the Allopathic, under different physicians.

It may be remembered that P. S. Varier had never taken any financial help from anybody either for the construction of the Hospital, or for the considerable recurring expenditure needed for its upkeep and maintainance besides the vast amount spent on the patients. He had made it a point that the Arya Vaidya Sala was to run the Hospital, funds needed for the purpose being taken always from the annual profits made by the Vaidya Sala. He was also keen that even after his death, the Hospital should continue its valuable services to the poor. And therefore, he had made necessary provisions in his will and testament by which twenty-five per cent of the annual profits of the Arya Vaidya Sala was to be used for the benefit of the Hospital. No wonder, the people of Kottakkal and a large portion of the inhabitants of the Ernad Taluk regard the Hospital as a great blessing for them. In fact, the Hospital remains, and will ever remain in the hearts of the grateful villagers, an eternal monument testifying to the philanthropy and selfless services of a great and good man — P. S. Varier.

CHAPTER XIV

EVENTS MOVE FAST

YEARS rolled on. P. S. Varier's Arya Vaidya Sala was making rapid strides, growing into a big industrial organisation, with the Ayurvedic College, the Hospital and the Dramatic Company as its valuable adjuncts. Its march of progress, though step by step, was impressive, a covetable achievement for any national organisation in this country. On the 12th October, 1927, it completed its twenty-five years of useful service. It was, no doubt, a very happy event to the founder and proprietor, P. S. Varier, besides his numerous employees who had been faithfully assisting him to build up the great edifice. People of Kottakkal also were glad. For, the Vaidya Sala and its kind owner had, in the quarter of a century, brought reknown to Kottakkal, besides rendering them inestimable services. And the thousands of men and women in the different parts of Kerala and outside were no less jubilant because, the Arya Vaidya Sala and its founder had helped to put fresh life and vigour into an ancient and noble science which was languishing for want of support.

Varier's loving employees and the grateful public of Kottakkal decided that the Silver Jubilee of the Vaidya Sala should be celebrated in a fitting manner. P. S. Varier bowed to their affectionate wishes and decided to celebrate the happy event with great *eclat*.

The Silver Jubilee Celebrations held on the 16th October, 1927, marked a Red letter day in the annals of Kottakkal. Members of every class, every creed, every vocation vied with one another in their enthusiasm to make the festive occasion a great success. Kottakkal put on its most festive and gala appearence. Processions, feasts, entertainments and many other items of a popular nature went off with great success making it truly a day of rejoicing to all the villagers. And P. S. Varier was the recepient of numerous congratulations and encomiums from all quarters of the globe.

Events marched forward in quick succession, some happy and some painful, one after the other. Now Varier realized that in tune with its grown-up stature, extensions to the buildings of the Vaidya Sala were an urgent necessity. For some time past, he had his living apartments on the spacious second floor of the stores of the Vaidya Sala. As business had now very much enlarged, the number of workmen and customers had gone up a great deal. The din and noise of a busy place like that of the Vaidya Sala sometimes got on his nerves. Remember, he was fast growing old, nearing his sixtieth year. He yearned for a quiet place, away from his place of business. And he decided to construct a beautiful and convenient house for his own needs as well as those of his growing family of cousins, nephews and nieces. His plan was to build a house with all the modern conveniences and equipments, adhering at the same time to the orthodox Malabar style of Architecture. Work was started in 1927 under his immediate supervision and guidance.

The year 1929 happened to be P. S. Varier's *Shashtyabda poorthi* year. To every Hindu the sixtieth year is an important and auspicious mile stone in his life's journey. Varier wanted to celebrate this event on a suitable scale. Therefore, the construction of the house had to be completed by that time. Many men worked at it and the palatial house, fitted with all modern conveniences, including electricity generated from Varier's own small power house, was now ready for occupation. The solemn ceremony of *Griha pravesha* was conducted on an auspicious hour of the night

of the 6th April, 1929. The magnificent four-storied edifice was named by P. S. Varier as "Kailasa Mandiram."

As his birth star fell on the first, and again, on the twenty-eighth of Meenam that year, Varier decided to celebrate his *Shashtyabda poorthi* on both the days. The first of the month was devoted more for religious and devotional purposes connected with the event. In honour of the day, he spent about 5,000 Rs. for copper-sheeting of the roof of the *Mandapam* of the temple of Venkita Thevar at Kottakkal. Offerings were made to many other temples also. But one remarkable thing he did that day was to give 100 Rs. for the repairs of the Kanjirapalli mosque at Kottakkal which had received similar contributions from him on previous occasions also. Feasts for Brahmins, priests and the members of the Kottakkal Palace were held on a grand scale, and he had his food in the old family residence with his own mother's sister who was now eighty-six years old. Tears filled his eyes as his old "*Cheriyamma*" (Mother's younger sister) herself served him food with her own fragile but loving hands, on that auspicious day. May be, thoughts about his darling mother also sent up tears to his eyes. Public eelebrations of the *Shastyabda Poorthi* were on the 10th April, 1929. But festivities began from the 5th April, starting with parties to all school children and their teachers of Kottakkal. Moplas of the locality were treated to tea at a grand party. And thousands of guests were honoured with feasts, and tens of thousands of the poor folk were fed sumptuously. Verily, all Kottakkal was in a festive mood for days together, and the village put a gala appearence for many a day to honour and felicitate their great hero.

Varier was nurturing in his mind his great desire to raise a temple in the precincts of his house. As the construction of the house was nearing completion, the foundations of a temple were laid in the courtyard of the house on the 3rd February, 1929. And on the first day of April, 1932, the idol of "*Viswambhara*" was installed there with elaborate ceremonies and rituals. The temple is small and modest-looking in size. But the image of the deity, exquisitely wrought in spotless white marble by an expert

craftsman of Agra, is a marvellous piece of art. P. S. Varier had specially made adequate provisions in his will for the proper management and conduct of the temple also.

The Arya Vaidya Sala had hundreds of customers in the Tamil areas, and many patients from there were going to Kottakkal to consult P. S. Varier. It was, rather, inconvenient for them, and expensive, too. Therefore, many of them requested Varier to open a branch of the Vaidya Sala in some place more convenient to them. At first, he hesitated. His own view was that instead of having a number of branches in unmanageable proportions, the most essential thing was to run a few on sound and efficient lines, giving the best service possible to the clientele. Yet, he felt their plea quite reasonable.

Luckily, in a short while, he came in possession of the Amity Hall and suitable buildings attached to it at Palghat. And without much ado he opened a branch there on the 28th, April, 1932, and put his beloved and trusted nephew, Arya Vaidyan P. Madhava Warrier, in charge of it as physician and Manager, to the great relief of friends of Palghat and the neighbouring Tamil areas.

When the Central Board of Indian Medicine was constituted by the Government in 1932, P. S. Varier was nominated as a Member thereof. After some years, when the practice of election, instead of nomination, came into vogue, Varier stood for elections and won. Till his death, his membership on the Board had continued. He was also an Examiner of the Government School of Indian Medicine, Madras. In recognition of the valuable services rendered by him to Ayurveda and the public at large he was awarded the title of "Vaidyaratnam" by the Government of India in the New Year Honours of 1933.

The course of these pleasant events had, on occasions, been marred by the deaths of some of his dear friends, near relations and faithful dependents. But the death on the 14th March, 1936, of his beloved "*Cheriyamma*" (aunt) in her 93rd year was a great bereavement.

Varier, now Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier, was, in the course of the many years that passed by, shouldering many heavy responsibilities. He had been working hard all his life. And many events, in between, disturbed his peace of mind. Now he was nearing his proverbial "three score and ten". He began to feel the strain of overwork. He felt tired: and gradually, a dullness, unprecedented in his energetic and enthusiastic life all these seventy years, showed signs of appearing. But he would not yield to sickness; he could not keep idle. It was then that news of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's "*Kaya Kalpa Chikitsa*" was seen featured in newspapers. The idea attracted Varier also. He decided to try some such treatment on himself, knowing too well the rigours and difficulties inherent in such methods. He chose "*Brahma Rasayana*" for this purpose, and immediately prepared it in his Vaidya Sala. He started the course on the 23rd January, 1938, continuing it for twenty-one days. And after that he took rest for forty days. And to his great surprise and joy he found that he had regained his lost energy, vitality and vivacity. Now he felt himself quite healthy, and was cheerful on that account.

Though the second world war shook the whole universe, it was a blessing in disguise to the Arya Vaidya Sala and all other business organisations. Because of the dearth of imported medicines and drugs in the country, the period was one of boom to Arya Vaidya Sala as its medicines were in great demand. In fact, the war and the consequent import restrictions and difficulties helped to revive Ayurveda in India, in spite of the Government! It was a time of phenomenal progress and prosperity for the Arya Vaidya Sala which it has maintained ever since.

By 1942, the Arya Vaidya College, Kottakkal, attained its twenty-fifth year. The glorious event of its Silver Jubilee was celebrated with great splendour in January, 1942, the Vaidyaratnam spending a few thousand Rupees from his own funds for the purpose.

P. S. Varier was paying weekly or fortnightly visits to his branches at Calicut and Palghat for the benefit of his numerous patients in those places. But as he found his varied activities taxing his time and energy too much, and as he grew old, reluctantly

had he to discontinue the practice. But he took care to attend to the patients who went to consult him at Kottakkal. And he made it a point to attend to his huge daily correspondence himself.

He thought it wise to entrust the different activities and departments of the Vaidya Sala and the allied institutions to persons whose ability and sincerity were unquestionable. By this, he told himself, that he could give proper training to such persons in his life time, preparing them to shoulder the heavy responsibilities in his absence. He chose for the administrative responsibilities — the biggest of all work — his nephew, Arya Vaidyan P. Madhava Warrier who was an Assistant physician at that time in the Vaidya Sala. The Vaidyaratnam had a very great esteem in the capacity and abilities and scholarship of his nephew who was also his desciple. (Madhava Warrier who was later the Managing Trustee and Chief Physician of the Arya Vaidya Sala lost his life in the air crash at Nagpur on the 12th December, 1953, after a glorious career). Arya Vaidyan P. V. Easwara Varier, also a desciple of his and trusted nephew-in-law, who was another assistant under him, was appointed to assist Madhava Warrier in his responsible duties. Easwara Varier was, later, appointed as Manager and Physician of the branch at Calicut where he continues in the same post. Other faithful and trust-worthy desciples and efficient persons were appointed to the different important posts at the Head Office at Kottakkal and its branches.

Then he made certain definite and well-thought arrangements in regard to the future working of the vast organisation. He had, besides, made necessary arrangements in regard to the management of his family properties by a deed executed in June, 1941. That gave him absolute freedom from all family encumbrances. In spite of these, he continued to have his watchful eyes on all the various institutions, and tendered advice and gave proper directions and training to the numerous assistants. In the evening of his life, his best hobby was to spend the evening hours with the members of his Natya Sangha, giving them training in Kathakali in the precincts of his "*Viswambhara*" temple. Those hours exhilarated him and gave him good cheer.

CHAPTER XV

WITHOUT BIDDING FAREWELL!

VAIDYARATNAM Varier was now spending a comparitively peaceful life. On the 5th January, 1944, he had a distinguished visitor, Pandit Hridaya Nath Kunzru, President of the Servants of India Society, as his guest. His activities, including the teaching of "Sareera Sastra" to the students of the final year class of the Arya Vaidya College, went on without a break.

January 29, 1944! It was a Saturday. That morning, the Vaidyaratnam felt a slight indisposition. May be, due to the extremely chill weather of January. It seemed to him that he had slight temperature. When his nephew-in-law, Dr. Ramankutty Varier, who was living with him in the same house came to see him, he examined him and said that he (uncle) had slight bronchial trouble, but nothing very serious. Because of the indisposition, the Vaidyaratnam did not teach his students that day. But he examined all his patients and attended to his correspondence, as usual. In the evening, he felt as though his pulse was playing hide and seek with him, occasionally stopping its beats.

He had his usual food at night. And at ten O'clock went to bed, after writing his Diary for the day which was a regular practice with him. As usual, his faithful servant Sankunni Nair, slept outside the door. As a slight cough disturbed him, Varier

could get only intermittent sleep. Yet, according to his daily routine, he woke up at five in the morning. When the servant who too had no good sleep came to the room immediately and suggested that a cup of good coffee might help to soothe the fatigue, the Vaidyaratnam replied in his jocular manner, so natural with him when talking with his servants, "I shall have it if you bring."

The servant hurriedly departed, and in a few moments returned with the coffee. When he stepped into the room, he stood stupified. The sight there deadened his nerves.

A bronze lamp was burning bright. With his head before it, Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier lay himself stretched, unclothed, on the floor, a sweet smile parting his lips, his left fingers on his right arm, feeling the pulse as it were. One side of his glasses was hanging from the ear. And there were his watch, Diary and fountain pen beside. The servant looked scared at the scene for a minute. But hoping that his master was asleep, he softly said "Coffee" to wake him up. But there was no movement. So the servant raised his voice a little and repeated, "Coffee". Yet, absolutely no change. He got frightened and ran to Dr. Ramankutty Varier who was sleeping in another room and woke him up. The Doctor dashed into his uncle's apartments and was, in another minute, examining his uncle's pulse and heart. "Great God!" he exclaimed, and heart-broken, he sat motionless. And Sankunni Nair, realizing the truth, fell down unconscious. In another instant, the whole house was up, and every body, men and women, relations, friends, servants and dependents, crowded round the great man, the object of their love and adoration, the protector of them all.

And so, Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier left this world on the dawn of Sunday the 30th January, 1944; left without bidding adieu to any!

By sunrise the sorrowful tidings spread like wild fire. Large concourse of mourners came flowing in to the "Kailasa Mandiram." After preliminary rites were performed according to custom, a huge procession of tear-filled men and women of all classes, castes

and creeds, many sobbing silently, many weeping aloud, passed round the departed Vaidyaratnam, paying their last homage and respects. The body lay there, covered with an exquisitely woven Benares silk shawl sent by the present Zamorin Maharaja, a great friend of the Vaidyaratnam. In the afternoon, the nephews and other relations carrying the body, the cortege went to the cremation grounds. And there, he who had helped many persons to restore their health and save them from death, even twenty-four hours ago, was consumed by the flames, dying in harness. ....The way of the world!

All the customary rites and obsequies were duly performed by his sucessors. The Vaidyaratnam had himself set apart 10,000 Rs. in his will for that purpose. His ashes were collected and deposited in the garden in the "Kailasa Mandiram". And a *Samadhi* was erected on the spot.

Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier's shrewd mind and power of foresight were remarkable. Many years before his death he had executed a Registered will and deposited it in the Sub Registrar's office at Kottakkal, on the 31st October, 1939. But having watched the trend of events since then, a day prior to his death, he had made up his mind to change that will and execute a fresh one in accordance with the changed circumstances. And on January 29, 1944, he had sent a close and trusted friend of his to bring his lawyer from Palghat for drafting the proposed new will. The friend left Kottakkal that evening. But alas! It was God's will that the will of 1939 itself should be his last and valid will and testament.

The Vaidyaratnam's will is a well-thought out and clearly-worded document. Great consideration had been shown by him to the future well-being of the family. For the proper administration and management of the Arya Vaidya Sala he had nominated the following persons in the will: (1) Rao Bahadur Dr. P. K. Varier (2) Dr. P. Ramankutty Varier (3) T. K. Krishna Menon *alias* Chinnan Menon (4) Siromani D. Rama Varier (5) C. Rama Varier (6) Arya Vaidyan P. Madhava Warrier (Managing Trustee) and (7) Arya Vaidyan P. V. Rama Varier.

Of these, Rao Bahadur Dr. P. K. Varier who had married a niece of the Vaidyaratnam was, for a long time, in the Madras Medical Service as a reputed physician and Surgeon. He retired from service while he was Personal Assistant to the Surgeon-General. Due to unsatisfactory health and other reasons the aged Doctor, after some time, resigned his membership on the Board of Trustees. In his place, Arya Vaidyan P. Krishna Varier, the present Managing Trustee was appointed. On the death of P. Madhava Warrier, the erstwhile Managing Trustee, on the 12th December, 1953, T. Sekharan Unni Varier B. A., L. T. was appointed to the vacancy of a Trustee.

The will enjoins on the Board of Trustees, among other things, to administer and manage the Arya Vaidya Sala and the Charitable Hospital, and to render assistance to the Arya Vaidya College so that those institutions march forward from progress to progress with their main object of serving the public at large and fostering Ayurveda, the funds needed for them being taken from the annual profits of the Vaidya Sala. And he has also stipulated that after twenty years of his death the major portion of the profits should be utilised for the benefit and progress of the Vaidya Sala and the Hospital. His will also provides for grant of pensions to his employees after their retirement from service. He had also given instructions in a note he had made on the 21st August, 1940, to distribute Rs. 3150 among twelve of his faithful employees whom he had named in it.

CHAPTER XVI

SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS

VAIDYARATNAM P. S. Varier was an attractive personality Fair in complexion, tall in stature with clear-cut features he had a commanding look. Born and brought up in an orthodox family in the rural parts, surrounded by temples and Palaces which were citadels of orthodoxy in Malabar, he was a connecting link between the old and the new. In the course of this story, many examples and incidents could be seen which amplify his progressive views and wide outlook.

We saw that it took two years to construct his palatial residence "Kailasa Mandiram". It was while its construction was going on rapidly that the Conference of the Kerala Sahithya Parishad (Malayalam Literary Academy) was invited to Kottakkal by P. S. Varier's cousin, P. V. Krishna Varier, in 1929. The Conference of the Academy held annually at different places attract quite a large congregation of the leading talents and literary men and women of Kerala. Kottakkal was a simple village without adequate facilities and conveniences which the large number of guests expected generally at the hands of the Reception Committee. When Krishna Varier thought about these difficulties, he felt uneasy. But he knew that his public-spirited and generous-hearted cousin alone could help him get over the predicament. P. S. Varier calmly heard his cousin. He soon

found a way out. He at once ordered his numerous workmen to hasten their work so as to get all the important parts of the house ready for occupation by the visitors. And by the time visitors and guests to the Conference began arriving, everything was ready. P. S. Varier's orthodox relations and friends were shocked. Because, it was considered inauspicious to occupy a house before its "House warming" and other customary ceremonies were performed. And now not only the house was being occupied before the usual ceremonies, but utter strangers hailing from all castes and creeds will be living there! P. S. Varier laughed heartily at the superstition of his people. He knew that he was only doing a laudable thing. And he did enjoy the company of the large number of visitors for whose comforts he himself rendered a good deal of personal help, treating the guests to a big feast himself. It may be remembered that P. S. Varier was one of the very few of the old guard who had heartily welcomed the Travancore Temple Entry proclamation.

His mind was always very alert. He could never waste a minute; nor could he sit idle. Till the last moment he remained a true *Karma Yogi*, working hard and helping others. He had a wonderful memory power which he inherited from his capable and intelligent mother. Artist that he was, he was very fond of nice and neat things around him. Being extremely hospitable, he took pleasure in receiving and entertaining guests.

Inimitable and unimitated was his desciplined life. Everything had a time for him, everything its proper place. The word "confusion" never found a place in his vocabulary. And it is a real wonder how a man of so many varied activities could lead a calm, quiet and successful life from beginning till end. Vaidyaratnam Varier was an adept in writing his diary which is a marvellous and useful record of every detail of his day-to-day (it would be more correct to say, hour to hour) activities, health conditions, financial position, home and world events. The way in which he kept the books of his Vaidya Sala, his personal funds, his mother's money and his household articles and his properties

was also praiseworthy. There was no mixing-up; and everything was minutely clear and up-to-date that at any moment, he could, at a glance at the books say what his assets were in the different departments. And remember, he was worth lakhs.

He had made it a principle to set apart whatever he got by way of fees and *dakshinas* for charitable purposes.

A large part of his time, we saw in the previous chapters, he spent for the revival of Ayurveda. His laudable efforts in that direction stood him in good stead. He had to fight against the Governmental authority on some occasions to up-hold the prestige of Ayurveda. Those were days when the Government of the land had no much love for this ancient system. And it was always found that the Anglomaniacs among the officers were trying to put down Ayurveda, helping to keep aloft Allopathy. And some of the rules and laws were such that they hit at Ayurveda and put obstacles in the way of its revival and progress. Varier had, even from the early stages of his Vaidya Sala, to put up a tough fight against some of the disabilities caused by the Excise laws.

He was, all his days, extremely careful in keeping the high quality and efficacy of his medicines. Nothing could deter him from the great ideals he kept before him in the advancement of Ayurveda.

His love of his hundreds of desciples, his anxiety for the well-being of his numerous dependents including his personal attendants and employees of the Vaidya Sala and other institutions, knew no bounds. To him, his employees were not his servants; he regarded them all as his own children. Amounts spent by him for the benefit of his servants and faithful employees, for building houses, for teaching children, for curing sickness, for giving daughters in marriage, from time to time, were huge and covetable. And his death was a deadly blow to most of them.

P. S. Varier was an enterprising industrialist who converted Ayurveda into an industry in Kerala. He was also a financeer

and Director of several Banking concerns in Malabar. He was a *litterateur*, a good poet and a great thinker. Stout of heart he was; yet, his kindness and charity earned for him the love of thousands of people who received help at his hands. He was a man of sterling qualities and versatile abilities. And above all, in all his actions he saw the hand of God working through him.

Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier was not a mere individual; he was a great institution which had a message to give to the world; a model worthy of emulation by all who aspire to achieve success in life.

CHAPTER XVII

EPILOGUE

VAIDYARATNAM Varier, presaging the future, had nominated in his will, his nephew and intelligent desciple P. Madhava Warrier as the Managing Trustee of the Vaidya Sala. And during the last ten years, under the able management of Madhava Warrier, the activities of the institution went at top speed. The audited annual accounts of the Vaidya Sala during the past few years show a phenominal rise in the sales and profits. And the progress and improvement are marked. The steady upward trend in its progress after the death of its founder in January, 1944, soon set aside all fears and suspicions of a decline and fall in the affairs of the Vaidya Sala, setting at nought the predictions of many when the illustrious founder departed from the scene. Thanks to his intelligent and wise guidance, selfless devotion to duty and untiring energy, Madhava Warrier was, with his army of faithful assistants and employees, able to make the great organisation which his beloved uncle had entrusted in his care, a mighty one in the course of a decade. And today, the Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, stands pre-eminently in the front ranks of other institutions of its kind.

Madhava Warrier always kept in mind the high ideals followed by his uncle. And he knew that his uncle's sheltering spirit guided him in all his selfless and sincere work like a guardian angel. The

nephew, with his uncle as his guiding star, went a step farther. He was much more progressive and modern in his views and outlook than the uncle. And therefore, he embarked, with the co-operation of his fellow-trustees, on schemes to develop the Vaidya Sala's activities on modern lines. When the Board of Trustees found themselves face to face with a crisis on account of short supply of prepared medicines as a direct result of increased demand, expansion schemes were readily taken on hand. Specially installed electrical machinery were soon put into operation. And the machines for grinding, pulverising, milling, filtering and tablet-making helped to increase production quickly, efficiently and hygienically. And to cope up with the increased work a new type of oven also was constructed.

Introduction of these modern methods had the desired effect. Production went up enabling the Vaidya Sala to meet the heavy demands of its vast clientele spread all over India besides the different parts of the globe such as Burma, Ceylon, Federated Malaya States, Iran, Iraq, Africa and Continental countries. When the Board of Trustees took over, the total assets of the organisation was of the value of Rs. 5,16,118–0–4 in January, 1944. But by January 31, 1952, the figure rose to Rs. 14,17,397–7–0.

There were only branches at Calicut and Palghat during P. S. Varier's days for the Vaidya Sala. Realizing the necessity for having a branch at Tirur, the nearest Railway Station to Kottakkal, Vaidyaratnam Varier had, before his death, decided to open a branch there. He had also purchased the necessary plot of ground with a small building on it. The branch at Tirur was opened by the Board of Trustees in 1945. The branch at Palghat could not cope with the increased needs of the Tamil areas. Therefore, in 1947, a branch had to be opened at Erode in the Coimbatore District.

The number on the rolls of the Office, manufacturing and other sections, and in the different branches and departments also has gone up many times. In 1951, a Union of workers was organised with the consent of the management.

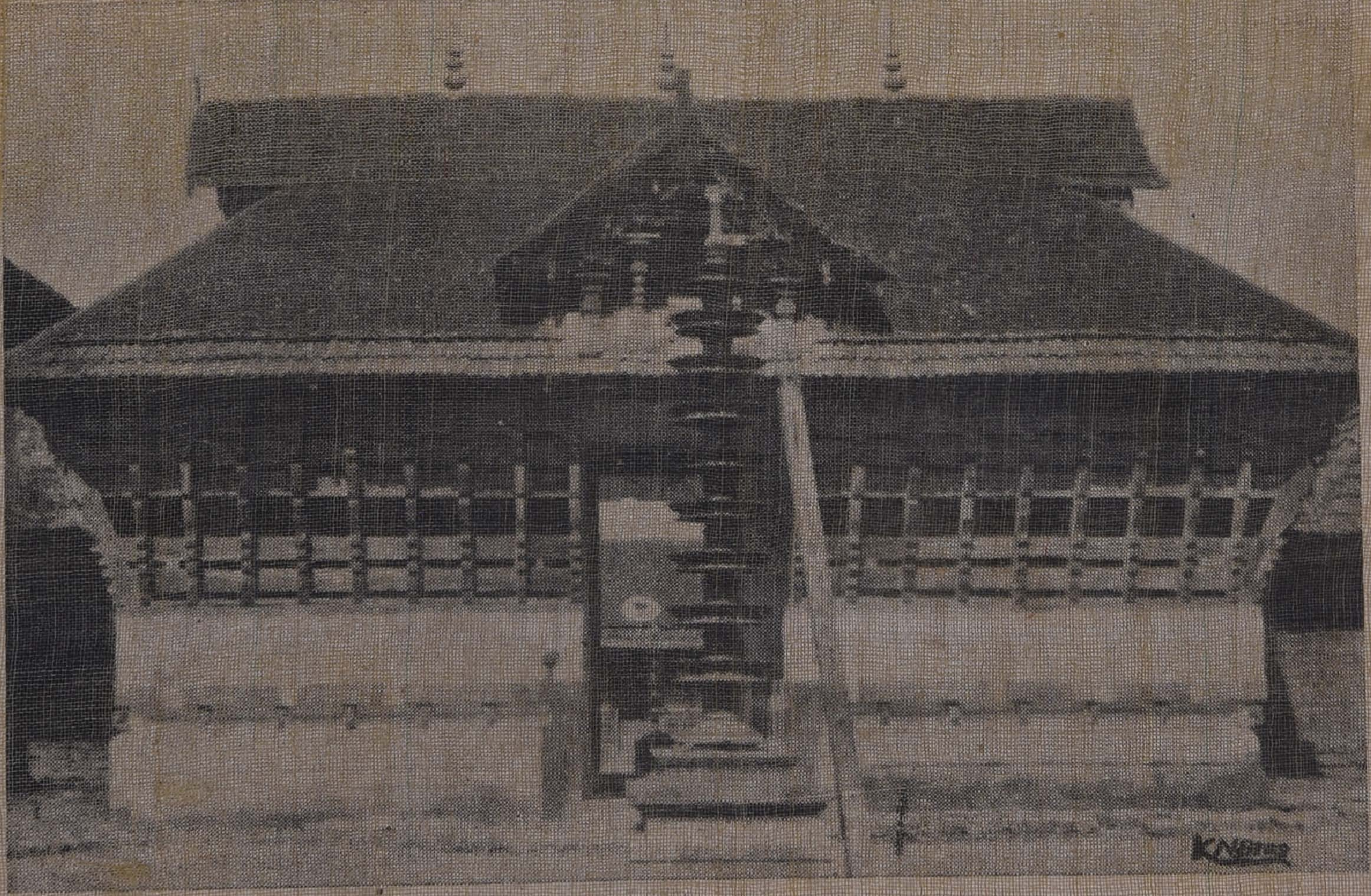
Yet, the Arya Vaidya Sala, the Hospital and the Arya Vaidya College have all to go forward many steps more if they are all to keep in line with the first-rate modern institutions of their kind. It was a dream of the illustrious founder; and it was a cherished dream of his successor, Madhava Warrier, too, to raise the organisation to much higher levels. Would to God, Madhava Warrier was given a longer span of life to fulfill his and his uncle's dreams! Alas! The fateful tragedy enacted by the plane crash at Nagpur on the 12th December, 1953, cutting short the young lives of the noble-minded, generous-hearted and patriotic Madhava Warrier (44) and his wife, Sarojini Varasyar, took away from the Ayurvedic world in India a rising star who could lead Ayurveda once again to its pristine glory!

But let us not lose hopes. The Arya Vaidya Sala and its allied institutions are laid on strong foundations by its great founder more than a half century ago. Paths for success have been well-laid by him and his nephew. It is now left to their successors to go ahead, faithfully following their noble ideals and selfless methods. Let the great organisation with varied activities ever remain an immortal and glorious monument of the great work those two noble souls had lived and died for. And may the glorious past be its faithful guide to a meritorius future.

FINIS

P. S. Varier is four score and ten!

To dust returneth !



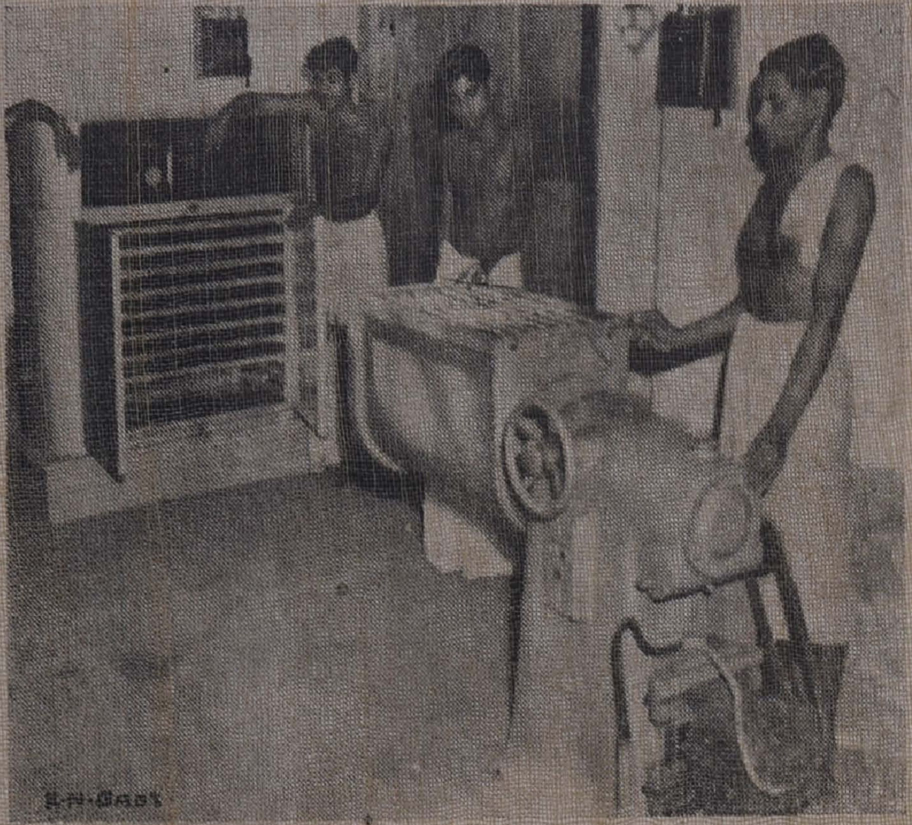
Siva Temple, Kottakkal

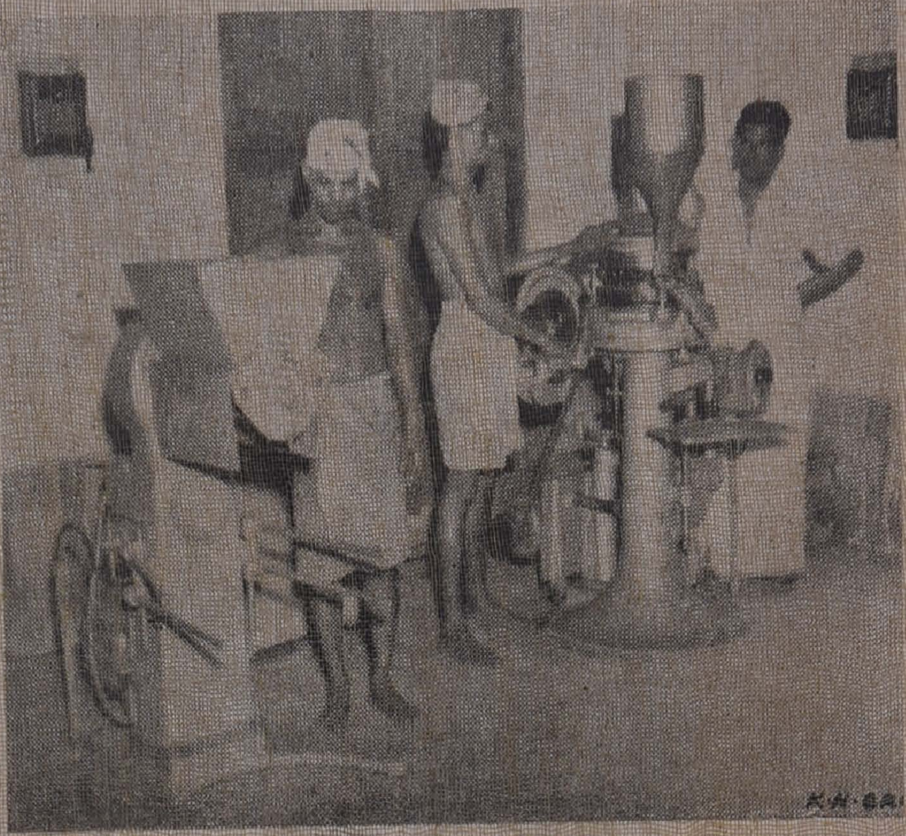
Varier's first family Residence

Out-house of the old family residence

The Kitchen (Boiling process on the latest type of hearth)

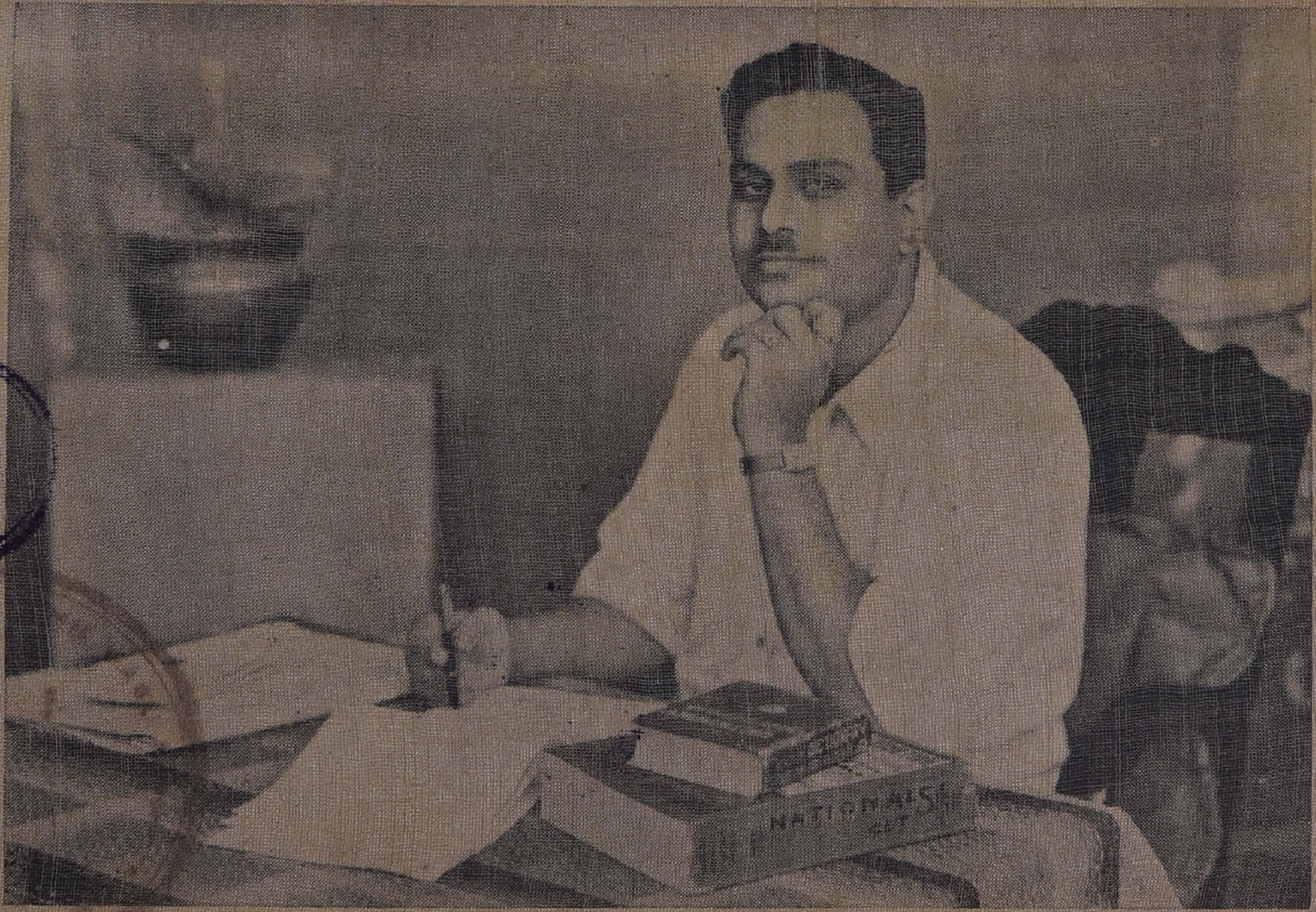
54





Electricity in Ayurveda ! Tab'et making and Powdering and Drying mchines

Sri. Jayprakash Narayan and The Vaidyaratnam.
(J. P. was a patient under the Vaidyaratnam at the Arya Vaidya Sala for about three months)



The Author

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